

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE OF COLOR IN  
MIDDLE AND SENIOR LEVEL MANAGEMENT POSITIONS AT  
NEW YORK CITY-BASED DANCE COMPANIES

By

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## **Abstract**

The racial composition of the artistic side of the dance community has a reputation of being diverse. According to the 2008 *Artists in the Workforce* report by the National Endowment for the Arts, nearly 40% of all dance artists in the U.S. are of color. However, reports about the racial composition of managers at non-profit dance companies show that approximately 80% are white/Caucasian. What is more, the racial composition of dance audiences in New York City is more than 80% white/Caucasian.

This study examines the recruitment, retention, and career and professional development of people of color in middle and senior level management positions at New York City based dance companies. New York City is world renowned when it comes to the art of dance, with people coming from all over the world to train and see dance. However, New York is also a city that is known for its multiculturalism. More than 50% of the City's total population is people of color (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).<sup>1</sup> Many mission-based organizations endeavor to serve underrepresented and disadvantaged groups. Racial minority groups fall into this target population. New York City, as well as the rest of the country, is seeing a rapid increase among the populations of people of color. This study attempts to understand why dance administrators do not reflect the racial diversity that is present among the artists in the dance community and the broader population that many dance companies are trying to engage.

Ten interviews with middle and senior level managers of dance organizations in the City were conducted, and an online survey was sent to a select group of dance companies that fit predetermined criteria. The study found that while middle and senior level managers of New York City based dance companies are predominantly white/Caucasian, the community embraces the notion of racial diversity. However, there

are other systemic challenges that may be of greater immediate importance than creating focused efforts on recruiting, retaining, and developing a targeted group of administrators, such as people of color.

**Keywords**

Recruitment

Retention

Development

People of Color

## **Preface**

My class in the Arts Administration program at Teachers College, Columbia University had 27 people. Of that, three of us were African-American, two were Latinos, and five were Asian/Asian-American. Almost one-third of the class was made up international students, which included white Europeans. While just under half of my class was part of a racially underrepresented group, I found that the composition was sufficient to enliven my educational experience. I was able to gain perspective on things that I otherwise would not have if I had been the only person of color in my class (which I had mentally prepared myself to be the case before learning who my classmates were).

My attention to the areas of recruitment, retention and development of middle and senior level managers in dance administration is a result of field observations I have made over the past several years. While I have only been in the field of arts administration for a few years, I have been dancing for more than 20 years. In my experiences as an artist and administrator I have encountered very few people of color in management positions. Whether in a collegiate atmosphere or at a summer dance intensive, I have rarely seen more than two people of color in management positions at dance organizations. Culturally specific organizations are the general exception, but as a field at large there is a lack of racial diversity in dance management. While that never deterred me from pursuing a career in this field, I did find it a bit disheartening and recognized early on that it could not remain this way. If anything, I found it to be more of a motivating factor to enter the field. There has to be a better distribution of the people deciding what audiences see, how they see it, and how much of it they will see. The issue is one other performing arts also face. The opera community reports 88% of its administrators are white/Caucasian (Cuyler, 2007). What does this say about the

performing arts community's willingness and ability to address and keep up with the pace of social changes? These changes can influence the sustainability and longevity of the various art forms as visible and accessible components of the American cultural experience.

While I am not an advocate of strictly looking at the world through racially defined lenses, I do recognize, especially as a woman of color, that many people in American society derive perceptions about people based solely on their race. One broad stereotype tends to define all people in one group, though we all know that not all people in a cultural group behave alike, nor have the same beliefs and/or values. People's life experiences, as well as genetics, shape who they become. Yes, there may be generic through lines that thread a group of people together, but each person has his own idiosyncrasies that distinguish him from the rest. I find that as an African-American woman what differentiates me from many other African-Americans is that I had the opportunity to be professionally trained in the field of classical and contemporary dance. I attended a university that is well known for its dance program and went on to study arts administration at the graduate level at a prominent center of higher education. It has been during my educational experiences that the imbalance in the racial distribution of people who have the opportunity to be the recipients of quality professional arts education has been magnified. Therefore, while recognizing that race is not the only factor that defines diversity, this study solely focuses on race due to my personal interest in and experiences with the topic.

## **Acknowledgments**

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## **Introduction**

### *Purpose of study*

The purpose of this study is to bring to light the racial imbalance that exists in the field of dance administration in New York City, and by extension across the U.S. By providing the field with a concrete assessment of the issue, I hope to initiate discourse that will bring about concerted efforts to attract more people of color into the profession.

### *Problem statement*

There is a dearth of people of color in middle and senior level management positions in the field of arts administration. According to the National Endowment for the Arts 2008 *Artist in the Workforce* report, while dance has the most racially diverse artist demographic, the racial demographic of people of color who are managing dance companies is not in alignment with that of the dance artists. Therefore, the field of dance administration is currently faced with a racial gap among its management professionals.

### *Research questions*

- Why are there so few people of color in middle and senior level management positions at New York City based dance companies?
- Specifically regarding people of color, what practices in the areas of recruitment, retention, and development are currently being implemented in the City's dance community?
- What challenges and opportunities does the field face in racially diversifying the field?

### *Significance of the study*

The study provides field practitioners with a factual look at the racial breakdown of who is managing dance companies, as compared to those who are performing and those who are in the audience. There has been little research in the field of arts

administration about the racial composition of its practitioners. Though the National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) Survey for Public Participation in the Arts does break participation data down by race, there is an absence of literature that focuses on the administrative community. Dr. Antonio Cuyler's (2007) study of the career paths of non-European American executive opera administrators is one of the first assessments of racial representation among executive arts administrators in the performing arts. This study endeavors to provide a similar researched-based contribution to the field of dance, while providing a detailed look at the areas of recruitment, retention, and development via quantitative and qualitative measures.

Due to its elevated position in the world's dance community and its multiculturalism, New York is the primary geographic location of this research. The analysis is based on quantitative and qualitative assessments made about New York City based dance companies that are 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organizations. The quantitative analysis is framed around an electronic survey that was sent to New York City dance companies. Companies surveyed had to have operating budgets of \$500,000 or more as of FY04-05, be based in New York City, and had to be incorporated as not-for-profit organizations. As a result of these prerequisites, the study sample has emphasis on contemporary and classical dance companies due to the pool of companies meeting survey participation requirements. Thirty-two (32) companies were surveyed with 16 responding. The survey results show that the racial composition of dance administrators in New York City is comparable to the national picture of the racial make-up of dance administrators, with 75% of executive directors in the City being white/Caucasian. The qualitative assessment is based on interviews conducted with 10 administrators. The findings from the interviews suggest that the primary challenge associated with

increasing the number of people of color in the field of dance administration is lack of awareness that the field exists as a profession. The study highlights and further analyzes the possible causes for lack of awareness and offers suggestions as to how the New York City dance community can recruit, retain, and develop people of color in the field of dance administration.

### *Study Sample*

The study looks at sixteen non-profit dance companies with budgets of \$500,000 or more. Therefore, there is a segment of the administrative population that has not been accounted for, thus only giving a partial analysis of the racial composition of dance managers in NYC.

Because the information provided by Dance/USA was primarily a compilation of classical ballet and modern dance companies, these are the only genres represented in sample. Limitations in addition to the small sample is my limited knowledge in the areas of organizational psychology, organizational behavior, and human resources may prevent a complete assessment of the areas of recruitment, retention and development.

## **Methodology**

I approached the research questions through quantitative and qualitative analysis. I conducted interviews with eight current middle or senior level managers of New York City based dance companies and two individuals who demonstrated knowledge on this topic but work for the field of dance as part of service organizations and/or as independent contractors. Eight of the interviewees are of color and two are white/Caucasian. Five interviews were conducted in person, three via telephone, and two electronically via the internet. Internet interviewees responded to questions via email due to the inability to talk with them in a more formalized fashion. Interviewees were chosen based on internet research of people of color working in management positions at NYC based dance companies, and in part, by recommendations made by trusted colleague Michelle Burkhart, Interim Director of Dance/NYC. Ms. Burkhart's position at Dance/NYC gives her access to many dance managers in New York, and she was able to recommend a more racially diverse group of individuals for me to approach with my research questions.

Each interview was framed around a predetermined set of questions that were specific, yet broad enough to allow each interviewee to expound on the questions as they saw fit. Upon the permission of the interviewee, each interview was recorded and transcribed. All telephone and in-person interviewees agreed to be recorded. The purpose of the interviews was to gain perspective on the issue of racial diversity in dance management from those who are presently working in the field. I looked for themes within their responses and similarities in the backgrounds of the people interviewed to determine if there was a pattern in the professional motivations, education level, and artistic experiences of people who enter into middle and senior level management


positions in NYC-based dance companies. The narratives have been used to provide both practical and theoretical suggestions and observations about the challenges and opportunities associated with diversity in dance management from seasoned administrators.

The quantitative component of the research study was executed through the creation and dissemination of an internet survey via SurveyMonkey.com. John Munger, Director of Research and Information for Dance/USA, provided me with a list of American dance companies that had operating budgets of \$500,000 or more as of FY 2004-05. I extracted all NYC dance companies from the list provided and sent a survey to 32 companies. The companies surveyed were contemporary, ballet, and culturally specific/ethnic in artistic scope. The purpose of the survey was to provide a current view of the racial composition of middle and senior level managers of NYC-based dance companies. The survey yielded a 50% response rate and was comprised of a series of open-ended and close-ended questions as they pertained to the respondent's individual company and the respondent's personal perspective on the diversity issue. Respondents were given the right to remain anonymous and those who chose to express that right on behalf of themselves and their organizations will be identified in general terms such as "manager," and the dance organizations they work for will be identified by pseudonyms such as Company A. (Survey results are referred to throughout the document with a selected summary in Appendix B.)

## **Subject Review**

### *Equal Employment Opportunity Overview*

The history of employee recruitment dates back to the reign of Julius Caesar in 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. when Caesar promised members of his Roman army that they would be rewarded if they were able to find a new soldier to join (Singh, 2008). Singh (2008) suggests that this is the first employee referral program. Soldiers had to meet certain criteria before being hired, and the process only became more difficult for prospective soldiers as laws were passed by the Roman Senate that created a social class system, which in turn determined what role a citizen could play in the army: the higher the status, more responsibility was given to a soldier.

One could argue that the Romans' establishment of a system where job responsibilities were determined based on class status marked the beginning of present day practices where, in most cases but certainly not all, the higher the education obtained, the greater the probability of attaining a management position where job responsibilities are greater in comparison to other workplace counterparts who have yet to have achieved the same level of educational, thus professional standing.  the proverb states, "To whom much is given, much is required."

On the other hand, it can also be argued that by granting one group of soldiers higher professional standing based solely on social status as opposed to capacity, skill, and drive was potentially one of history's first displays of employment discrimination. Nepotism is just one of humankind's flaws that lead to discrimination against others. Racism, sexism, ageism, among other social ills that result in the exclusion of underrepresented groups, all continue to cultivate workplace inequality and inequity.

Workplace inequality and inequity were especially problematic among people of color and women in the United States until the federal government passed legislation under the 1964 Civil Rights Act called Title VII. Title VII provides statutory protection which states “that an employer cannot discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin” (Dessler, 2002, p. 27). Though there are currently no federal laws to protect people from being discriminated against based on sexual orientation, several cities and states have established statutes that guard citizens on their basis. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) was established under Title VII. The EEOC is a board of five members appointed by the president. Its function is to “[investigate] job discrimination complaints from aggrieved individuals” (2002, p.28). The board initially serves as a mediator between employers and employees who are in dispute. In the event that a mutually agreed upon resolution cannot be reached, the EEOC may file discrimination charges against employers on behalf of the aggrieved.

During the Johnson administration an executive order was issued which stated to ensure equal employment opportunities, all employers that do business with the U.S. government must implement an affirmative action program. The administration proclaimed that simply stating that employers are required to create equal employment opportunities, which are designed to make sure that anyone who is applying for a job, regardless of race, color, religion, sex or national origin has the same and equal chance of being considered for that job based on his/her qualifications, is not enough. Affirmative action plans promote active hiring and recruitment practices of underrepresented groups in the workforce. Organizational psychologists Kreitner and Kinicki state, “Affirmative action is an artificial intervention aimed at giving management a chance to correct an imbalance, an injustice, a mistake, or outright discrimination that occurred in the past.

Affirmative action does not legitimize quotas. Quotas are illegal... It also is important to not that under no circumstances does affirmative action require companies to hire unqualified people” (2007, p. 49).

While affirmative action was initiated to ensure equal opportunities among all qualified individuals in the workforce, there is unquestionably an ongoing imbalance in the number of people of color in managerial positions as compared to the ratio of women in comparable positions. The climb up the professional ladder for people of color is imbalanced in comparison to the rate at which racial minority populations are growing in the U.S. “Asians and Hispanics are expected to have the largest growth in population between 2000 and 2050. The Asian population will triple to 33 million by 2050, and the Hispanics will increase their ranks by 118% to 102.6 million...All told, the minority groups will constitute 49.9% of the population in 2050 according to the Census Bureau” (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2007, p.54). Kreitner and Kinicki go on to note that though minority populations are increasing in size there seems to be a glass ceiling in the professional world. As of 2001 an aggregate of 22.2% of managerial positions in the U.S. were held by Black/African Americans and Hispanics, as where 46.6% were held by women. Furthermore, the number of race-based discrimination complaints filed with and deemed reasonable by the EEOC increased from 294 in 1995 to 1,189 in 2004 (2007, p.54). Moreover, there is a substantial income gap between people of color and whites/Caucasians.

While legislative strides have been made to shorten the bridge that stands between people of color and professional advancement, it is apparent that, that is not enough. It is my view that policies focused on diversity will not be as effective as they can be if employers do not recognize and embrace the personal and organizational benefits of a



diverse and inclusive work environment. While this thesis will solely examine racial diversity among middle and senior level managers of New York City based non-profit dance companies, I maintain that racial diversity in managerial positions is an important component of all industries and needs to be valued as a weighted initiative for the betterment of America's workforce at-large.

### *Arts Administration and the Not-for-profit Sector*

The professionalized field of arts administration developed as the performing and visual arts began to operate themselves as money generating businesses. Theaters, museums, dance and opera companies have been around for centuries. However, as managerial needs of such arts organizations became more sophisticated, so did the need for more formalized training. With Yale University's Master of Fine Arts program, which offered a concentration in arts management, along with UCLA and the University of Wisconsin, being the first higher education programs in arts management, an explosion of several other arts administration programs across the U.S. and abroad soon emerged, with an estimated 400 programs as of 1999 (Evrard and Colbert, 2000).

Arts administration programs teach a variety of subjects pertaining to management, leadership, marketing, finance, education, fundraising, production, and law for arts and cultural institutions; many of which in the U.S. are not-for-profit corporations and fall under the not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) federal internal revenue code. The Association of Arts Administration Educators is an organization that was founded in 1975 as a forum for educators of administrators in the fields of performing and visual arts, media, literary arts and arts service organizations. It also advocates for high curricular standards for arts administration programs at colleges and universities. Several studies in the field have been conducted to examine educational backgrounds of arts

administrators, what an arts organization values in its administrators, the value of arts administration programs, and differences in career advancement based on gender.

However, there has been little to no exploration of the racial demographic of these administrators. While Paul DiMaggio (1992) has researched the racial, ethnic and cultural breakdown of audience participation in the arts, the field's absence of recognition of the racial and ethnic make up of its arts leaders is an oversight that must be corrected. Given that many arts organizations strive to reach diverse audiences, it seems that it would only help initiatives such as community outreach, programming and audience development to have a staff that is a microcosm of the communities they are serving and/or hoping to serve. Stein's (2000) article, "Creating Opportunities for People of Color in Performing Arts Management," asks vital questions concerning the incongruities that exist between the obligations of performing arts organizations from legal, social and moral positions of serving the public and the implications of such on how performing arts organizations choose to recruit and staff their managerial positions. I share Stein's concerns and hold the view that the more culturally diverse the staff, the better positioned the organization is to meet its diversity and inclusion goals.

I am aware that racial diversity among employees alone does not guarantee that an arts organization will be better prepared to address its diversity and/or outreach initiatives. However, not to see the challenges that arts organizations could potentially face in terms of employee recruitment, community visibility, public financial support, among other factors that can impact the sustainability of an arts organization is a disservice to the arts. There is an increasing number of arts and cultural institutions looking for formally trained arts managers. From an educational point of view, what

steps, if any, are arts administration programs taking to recruit racially diverse student bodies? What is the field doing to improve its employee statistics?

Stein (2000) references Rogers' and Smith's study, *Nonprofit Management and Leadership: The Status of People of Color*, which found that according to the 1990 Census, people of color made up 14.3% of all managers working in the non-profit sector at-large. This includes other fields such as education, hospitals, and social services. Halpern (2006) reports an increase in that statistic noting that approximately 20% of all nonprofit organizations being led by Black/African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanic/Latinos (10%, 6%, and 4%, respectively), with Hispanic/Latinos having the greatest presence among employees of color in the arts and culture sector (6.7%) as of 2002.<sup>2</sup> While these figures suggest notable improvements have been made in the placement of people of color in managerial positions of non-profit organizations, 80% of managers are still white/Caucasian, most of whom are white males (2006).

The field of arts administration is still very young compared to several other fields such as medicine and education. In many respects the field is still establishing itself as a valid subject for study and continues to compete with disciplines such as business. Nonetheless, as previously stated, it is a profession that endeavors to disseminate arts and culture to all communities, thus the diverse populations that reside within. Therefore, especially during a period when America's racial make up is changing at rapid rates, arts administrators should not just talk about racial diversity in management, but mobilize efforts to achieve it. Cuyler (2007) poses an interesting point when questioning the readiness of arts administration educators and practitioners and their ability to truly embrace the notion of racial multiculturalism in the sector's workforce. While I take the position that many current administrators and educators are ready to embrace diversity

and multiculturalism among employees and students, we should be reminded that the bulk of the people currently in managerial positions are white/Caucasian and may not know how to approach the issue. Therefore, barriers that may be preventing people of color to enter the field may be overlooked by those who are in the position to effectively enforce change that supports racial diversity in management positions. However, this is not to suggest that people of color are not responsible for taking the steps necessary to raise awareness of the problem and be active participants in making sure that change happens. However, organizational goals cannot be met if management does not demonstrate support for the goals.

I believe some people still fear discussing race relations because it has been such a taboo topic for so long. However, if arts administrators continue to skirt around the issue by recognizing its existence and importance while neglecting to nurture it, the field runs the risk of overlooking those who may be some the best qualified, most innovative, and perhaps the finest leaders that the field could ever have; leaders who may possess the tools necessary to influence change and advance the arts' place in society.

### *Rise of Classical and Contemporary Concert Dance in America*

Dance is an ephemeral art form that illustrates the beauty, grace and physical strength that the human body possesses. It is a medium through which people communicate with their gods, their communities, and with themselves. For many dancers movement is a way to nurture the spiritual being and generate a perpetual flow of energy through which they are able to absorb the environment in which they live. In some cultures traditional and folk dances are used to conjure up spirits. In others it is used to celebrate the rite of passage for a young boy or girl to adulthood. Concert dance<sup>3</sup>, such as ballet, tap, jazz and modern, is performed for entertainment, as well as to dramatize

sociopolitical issues that may be plaguing various communities. Dance has a close relationship with several allied arts such as music, theatre, photography, and even literature; and some choreographers have incorporated technology and media arts into their works. Today concert dance continues to evolve as an art form and is an industry that contributes millions of dollars into the economies of several major cities and continues.

While Broadway theatre, which has a history that can be traced back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, has long incorporated dance in its productions, concert dance as we know it today emerged in the early 1900s. Dance as component of the American cultural landscape began with the Atlanta Ballet, which traces its founding back to 1929 (Heilbrun and Gray, 2001). However, it was the establishment of the School of American Ballet (SAB) under the direction of George Balanchine and with the financial backing of Lincoln Kirstein in 1934 that is most often noted as being the catalyst for the dance explosion that took place in the U.S. during that time. Prior to SAB the American public was exposed to touring European ballet companies, but truly saw the art form as European; thus some theatergoers, while appreciative of the dance, were reluctant to accept ballet as an American art form (Anderson, 1992). Historical theorists suggest this is due to ballet's rise under the aristocracy of the royal courts of Europe and having no place in the democratic society such as America (1992). American dance practitioners were urged to start a form that was truly America's own.

Pioneered by dancers and choreographers like Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn, Loie Fuller, and Martha Graham, modern dance became the American dance style. While not easily defined, modern dance encompasses movement styles from ballet, traditional folkloric, and ethnic forms of dance. Movements can be minimalistic,

pedestrian, angular and low to the ground, as well as high and elevated, as seen in classical ballet technique. Post-modern dance revolutionaries such as Trisha Brown and Merce Cunningham played with ideas of repetitious movement and using unmetred music, if music was used at all. Dancers tend to dance in bare feet and often times wear costumes that flow away from the body, in complete contrast to the traditional leotards, tights and pointe shoes/slippers that one would observe on a ballet dancer. Several contemporary modern choreographers experiment with movement in ways that the pioneers did not. It is a genre of dance that is truly innovative and forever reinventing itself in the performing arts community. “Modern dance can also be said to exemplify both American self-reliance and, in its creatively permissive spirit, American ideals of democracy and nonconformity” (1992, p. 172).

### *State of the Art*

The American concert dance community has shown continuous growth over the last several decades. The total number of ballet and modern dance companies grew from 46 in 1958 to 576 in 1980 (Heilbrun and Gray, 2001). There was a dance explosion that took place in the U.S. between the 1960s and 1980s. During this period the dance community experienced rapid growth in the development of non-profit dance companies, which were mostly ballet and modern. *Raising the Barre*, a NEA report that studied the economic, geographic, and financial trends of non-profit dance companies from the late 1980's through the late 1990's, notes that span of a decade as the beginning of a change in climate for dance. Earned and unearned income ventures changed as touring “became unpredictable and less remunerative” (NEA, 2003, p.4) and artists were expected not only engage to audiences with their aesthetic practices and products but also to take on new roles in the community as educators and social commentators.

These changes were met with funding support from all levels of government. The NEA's *Dance Touring Program* in the 1970s was instrumental in the rapid growth of the dance community. Individual artist grants were also being distributed during this time, which funded choreographers who "demonstrated talent and promise of the future" (NEA, 2003, p. 2). The Ford Foundation's support of dance, which began in the mid-1960s and had a heavy emphasis on ballet, also contributed to the growth of professional non-profit dance companies in the U.S.

By 1983 the *Dance Touring Program* initiative had been eliminated. Grants to individual artists ceased in 1995 due to a federal mandate, and the NEA experienced vast budget cuts during the 1990s. Touring slowed down and financial resources for the arts at-large were beginning to decline. However, in 1985 David White, then executive director of Dance Theater Workshop, gathered a group of 14 presenting organizations together to address the issue. White and his colleagues created the National Performance Network (NPN), which "dedicated funds for the presentation of work and extended artists' residencies in communities. NPN is now an independent non-profit membership organization" ([www.npnwed.org](http://www.npnwed.org)).

Attacks on the NEA by right-wing politicians like the late Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina caused unrest in the arts community, which had further implications for the role of arts and culture in America. Though the dance community was experiencing great hardship during this time, *Raising the Barre* nevertheless reports a 93% growth in the number of dance companies between 1987 and 1997. And for every NEA dollar granted to dance companies, \$3.50 was leveraged from other sources (2003).

Compared to other performing arts dance is still in its adolescence, with most established companies being 50 years of age or younger. National performing arts service

organizations OPERA/America, Theater Communications Group, and the League of American Symphony Orchestras were founded in 1970, 1961, and 1942, respectively. Dance/USA was established in 1982. However, the field is continuing to grow its audiences and further establish its presence in the cultural community. While many non-profit arts institutions continue to struggle to survive, dance has a smaller pool of resources, which include financial and administrative support. According to the *Artists in the Workforce* report, dancers and choreographers only make up 1.3% (25,651) of the total artist workforce. Dance is a small arts community; therefore during times of economic crises, the blow to dance organizations can be extremely severe. On the other hand, dance continues to be a highly revered artistic form.

Dance as a field is also open to change. This openness is illustrated by dance's willingness to embrace the topic of diversity. The issue of diversity was a major topic of discussion at the 2008 National Performing Arts Conference in Denver. Dance/USA, which has a 16 person staff, two of who are people of color, has "inclusiveness" as one of the organization's, thus the larger dance community's, core values.

*Inclusiveness enriches a community and the experiences of its constituents by expanding its perspective and increasing its diversity. Dance/USA seeks to have our activities informed by a broad range of interests, points of view, cultures, and individual/organizational diversity by creating access, encouraging participation, and valuing differences. Dance/USA*

Having a written document that states a community's beliefs and interests is a notable step in the right direction to effect change. It shows a sense of commitment, or at least acknowledgment, that diversity is a positive thing. However, as stated earlier, it is the active, mobilized efforts to institute change that resonate most with minority populations. In a list provided by Dance/USA's John Munger, as of FY 2005, 45 of the 80 non-profit dance organizations in the U.S. that reported operating budgets of \$1



million or more have male executive directors and 35 have female executive directors. The list also reported that 62 of the executive directors for these companies were white/Caucasian, 4 black/African American, 1 Hispanic, and 1 multi-racial (Caucasian/Native American). The racial profile for the remaining 13 executive directors was not provided. While this is not surprising, I still find this racial gap to be alarmingly vast. Sixteen of the 80 companies are located in the state of New York, 15 of which are in New York City. Two of the New York City-based executives are black/ African American, 1 is the previously mentioned multi-racial executive, and 11 are white.<sup>4</sup> I have not confirmed racial background information for the final executive director. The survey I disseminated to New York City based dance companies this past winter yields similar results.

### *Dance in New York City*

New York City is arguably one of the most racially and ethnically diverse cities in the world. It is the epitome of a “melting pot” community, consisting of hundreds of different nationalities and languages. From the moment Ellis Island became a center of refuge and symbol of hope and freedom for many Europeans during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, New York City turned into a land of many nations. It became a place where many believed all things were possible and has been recognized as the capital of finance, fashion, and manufacturing at various points in history.

New York City is home to many renowned dance companies like Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Ballet Hispanico, American Ballet Theatre, Martha Graham Dance Company and Mark Morris Dance Group. Emerging dance artists come from around the U.S. and abroad to train at New York City based dance institutions because they are aware of the reputation that the city has for training some of the best dancers in

the world. What is more, New York City is a land of opportunity for those who aspire to start their own dance companies, engage in dance research, and/or perform before a sophisticated audience of dance aficionados. There is room for every genre of dance and every type of dancer.

With respect to current figures, the actual aggregate number of registered non-profit 501 (c) (3) dance companies in New York City is unknown. However, it is known that as of September 2006 there are 76 dance companies in the U.S. that have operating budgets over \$1,000,000. Fifteen of the 76 companies reside in New York City (approximately 20%) ([www.danceusa.org](http://www.danceusa.org)). There are an additional 15 companies that have operating budgets between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000.<sup>7</sup> According to an economic impact study conducted by Dance/NYC between 2002 and 2003, dance companies in New York contributed nearly half a billion dollars to the City's economy directly and indirectly. Almost 3,000 people are employed by dance companies based in New York City, which includes full-time, part-time, and contracted employees.<sup>8</sup> The study also found that audience attendees are highly educated, with 84% having post secondary degrees, and mostly comprised of white/Caucasian patrons (approximately 86%). This is an interesting statistic given that the National Endowment for the Arts' *Artists in the Workforce 1990-2005* report found that 40% of all dancers and choreographers in the U.S. are people of color.<sup>9</sup> This number suggests that the artistic side of the dance community is relatively diverse. On a national scale, the report states that approximately 30% of the U.S. labor force between 2003 and 2005 was comprised of people of color, compared to only 20% of the entire artist workforce.<sup>10</sup> While there has been no study that examines the racial composition of dancers in New York City, Dance/NYC, a branch of the national service organization Dance/USA, is currently seeking funding for a research

initiative that would include gathering such information. But what does the racial demographic look like for people managing these companies? This is a question that I hope to answer in this study. In my personal experiences as a member of the dance community, both artistically and administratively, I have often times been one of few, if not the only, person of color in the rehearsal studio or at the board meeting. Why is there a discrepancy in the racial make-up between those on the stage and those making sure there is a stage on which to perform?

## **Chapter 1: Recruitment**

Employee recruitment entails “practices and activities carried on by an organization for the purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees” (Barber, 1998). Many large corporations have employee recruitment plans that are designed to attract potential employees that are not only capable of filling vacant positions but also add to the organization’s culture. This section will look at employee recruitment practices: 1) why recruitment strategies are important, 2) what media are being used to recruit prospective talent and the impact of such media on attracting desired applicants, and 3) the role recruitment strategies and practices have in racially diversifying the non-profit management population.

### *Recruitment Process and Strategy*

Breaugh and Starke (*Journal of Management* [JoM], 2000) cite the work of Dr. Sara Rynes, recruitment and staffing specialist in the Department of Organization and Management at the University of Iowa, when noting that the bulk of recruitment research has been centered around recruitment sources, recruiters and realistic job previews. Recruitment sources are the means through which a job applicant hears of a vacant position (i.e. newspapers, internet, intra-office). Recruiters are the people in the field who are actively seeking new employees on behalf of an organization. These individuals can be in-house employees or recruiters from an outside firm that have been hired by an organization to seek new employee talent. Job previews are the perceptions that a prospective applicant has about a job’s duties and an organization’s culture based on information the candidate has received from recruiters and/or interviewers. These three focus areas affect what Rynes (1989) refers to as pre-hire and post-hire outcomes. Pre-

hire are “applicant impressions of recruiters, perceived job or organizational attractiveness, intentions to pursue job offers, expectancies of receiving job offers, and actual job choices” (p. 7). Post-hire examines “satisfaction, commitment, performance, and length of service” (p. 7). Recruitment practices not only influence the quality of prospective hires but also test an organization’s ability to maintain the attention of desirable candidates. Therefore, strategic recruitment processes are critical in an organization’s effort create the best person-job fit for potential new hires.

Breaugh and Starke (JoM, 2000) suggest that the first step in the recruitment process is creating recruitment objectives. By determining factors such as the types of applicants they are looking to recruit (i.e. skill set, education level, etc.), the turn around time between interviewing and presenting someone with a job offer, the diversity of hires, how much money is to be spent in recruiting new hires, as well as post-hire objectives like maintaining or improving employee retention rates, organizations better position themselves to create the most effective and pragmatic way of finding the type of person(s) who will best meet the needs of the organization. Figure 1 illustrates Breaugh’s and Stark’s organizational recruitment process. Once recruitment objectives have been established a strategy needs to be put in place to mobilize efforts that will yield favorable recruitment results.

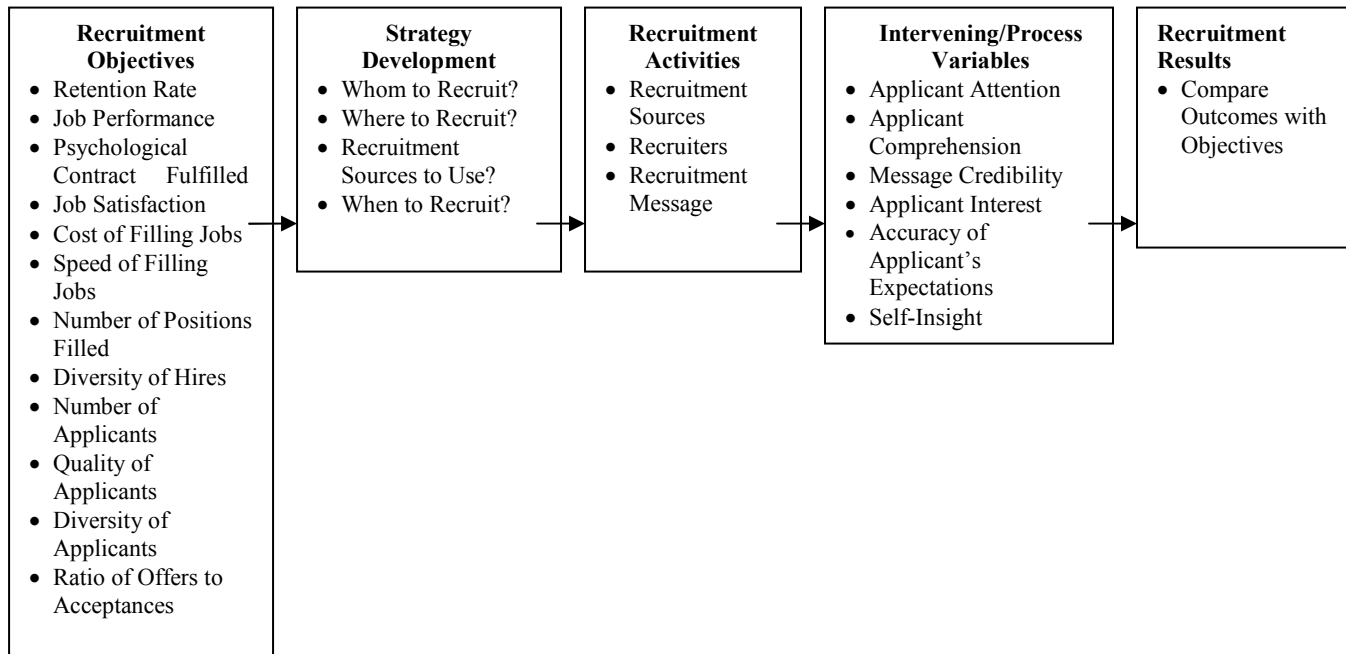


Figure 1. A Model of the Organizational Recruitment Process (Breaugh and Starke, 2000)

The recruitment activities of an organization determine the magnitude of reach that organizations will have when looking for prospective employees. Understanding the media that various groups of people use to search for jobs is a useful tool when planning recruitment strategies. However, an organization's image and reputation also impact whether or not jobseekers are willing to consider that organization for employment. The recruitment process becomes a partnership between the employer and the potential employee. The experiences that an applicant has during the recruitment process (i.e. the organization's timeliness in following up with an interviewee after the first meeting) influences whether or not the applicant will continue to pursue the vacant position. Harris and Lasson (as cited in Edwards, Scott, Raju, 2003) note that while little research has been conducted on the various factors that affect applicant's decisions to apply for a job, there is enough evidence to suggest that many based their decisions on salary, geographic

location, and organizational policies. But before the decision to take a job presents itself, applicants have to determine whether or not they will apply to listed positions.

Image theory is when people “adopt and implement plans to reach goals in order to satisfy principles” (Mitchell and Breach, 1990 as cited by Harris and Lasson in Edwards et al., 2003). The theory suggests that candidates ask questions such as “Will this position put me on the path to achieving my long-term career goals?” and “Are the organization’s values in alignment with my personal values?” Before jobseekers apply for certain jobs they answer these questions for themselves. People are less likely to apply to organizations that promote the sell of alcohol if they are opposed to the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Costs and benefits analysis is another component of image theory, which is usually implemented by job candidates at the interview or job offer stage of the recruitment process. It is at this juncture where people seriously contemplate the effect that accepting the position could have on other aspects of their lives (i.e. time away from children vs. steady stream of income).

At the core of recruiting activities are the recruitment sources used to communicate to the workforce that jobs are available. Commonly used sources are newspapers, electronic job bulletins like Monster.com, electronic recruiting which is when employers look for posted resumes online, job fairs, radio, employee referral and search firms. Applicants gain their first impression of organizations from recruitment sources. The information made available to jobseekers during this pre-hire phase, such as job description, desired qualifications, and salary quickly impact the number of applicants that a position may attract.

Print ads are still the most widely used recruitment sources. These include listings in newspapers and professional and trade magazines. Harris and Lasson (Edwards et. al., 2003) suggest that newspapers traditionally attract jobseekers looking for clerical, service and production jobs. Job listings in professional publications generally attract more qualified candidates for those specific professions. Moreover, Lasson and Harris note that because print ads have a greater reach to the general public, they are better at bringing in a diverse pool of applicants. The disadvantage to print ads, namely newspapers, is that they don't necessarily attract the most qualified applicants.

On the other hand, electronic recruitment sources like Monster.com and CareerBuilder.com have proven to be most successful in obtaining large numbers of people who are posting their resumes online. This enables employers to search for smaller pools of more qualified applicants at their discretion. Electronic bulletins have also proven to be successful by having greater international reach. Many organizations, both in the for-profit and non-profit sectors, list available jobs on their websites. The percentage of Fortune 500 companies recruiting via the internet increased from 10% in 1997 to 75% in 2000 (Dessler, 2002). Heavily used internet based jobsites for non-profit arts organizations include Idealist.org and NYFA.org. According to its 2004 Annual Report, Idealist.org had 45,000 non-profit organizations from various industries registered with the site to promote various aspects of the organizations, including job openings. And though it does not give specific numbers, the New York Foundation for the Arts 2006 Biennial Report states that the most accessed sections of its website are the job listings and another resource for working artists called *NYFA Source* (NYFA, 2006). According to a July 2002 report from the Pew Charitable Trusts (Boyce and Rainie,



2002) more than fifty-two million Americans used the internet to search for jobs with approximately four million searching everyday. This was a 60% increase from 2000. The report also says that while 44% of white/Caucasians with internet access had done online job searching, 60% of black/African-Americans and Hispanics with internet access used the internet for job searches. The report also states that there is a correlation between income and education and internet access. Most households with incomes of \$75,000 or more are more likely to have done online job searches as are people with college degrees.

With respect to employee referrals, Breugh and Starke cite Ullman's 1966 study that found "new employees who were recruited as a means of informal sources (i.e. employee referrals, direct applications) had a lower turnover rate than individuals recruited via formal sources (i.e. newspaper advertisements, employment agencies)" (JoM, 2000, p.419). Referrals also introduce more qualified applicants for open positions. However, hiring from within can create a homogenous work environment which may make it difficult for organizations that wish to diversify their staff (Rynes, 1989; Edwards et. Al, 2003). Lasson and Harris suggest this may also be in conflict with meeting EEO needs, such as mobilizing affirmative action plans that encourage all qualified individuals to be considered for jobs, especially if the staff is not currently diverse.

In a 2007 *Chronicle of Philanthropy* article, Michael Watson, Senior Vice President for Human Resources for Girl Scouts of the USA (a non-profit organization), discusses the non-profit sector's need to diversify its workforce. As baby boomers begin to retire and the population of American communities continues to diversify racially, "nonprofit groups need to do a better job of reaching out to people of color...they remain underrepresented among non-profit leaders" (Watson, 2007. n.p.). Watson says that

people of color represent some of the nation's most talented employees and the non-profit sector needs to do a better job not only of recruiting more people of color but positioning itself to remain a competitive and attractive field, especially in comparison to business and government. He goes on to say, "Nonprofit groups have to be willing to move beyond traditional hiring sources and learn to recruit in different places and use different techniques." Watson suggests non-profit organizations build relationships with professional organizations to which people of color belong. He also recommends posting job listings on sites that reach more people of color and if recruiting firms are being used, requiring them to present a diverse pool of candidates for every job opening.

In the survey I sent to a select group of companies in the New York City dance community respondents were asked if their organizations actively recruit people of color to senior or middle level administrative positions. Approximately 69% (11 of 16 companies) of respondents said "no" with the remaining 31 % (5 respondents) saying "yes." Respondents who answered in the affirmative were asked to describe the methods used and indicate whether or not they found them successful. A manager for "Company A," identified as a culturally specific ballet company said, "The first time this has happened was just this past year, as they cast out a wide national search for a Latino School Director with the assistance of a strategic firm." Richard Caples, Executive Director of the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, said, "We look for people of color who we think would be good candidates—based on the quality of their work at their current jobs—and we recruit them by asking if they might want to come work for our company." One respondent noted use of professional search firms that understand the organization's culture, while Amy Casello, Managing Director for Brooklyn-based and culturally

specific Urban Bush Women, highlighted that because their organization is so small, turnover is low and active recruitment rarely takes place. However, when hiring interns and special project assistants, the company mostly contracts African-American women that the company helps with skill development, increasing their level of responsibility, and their earning potential.

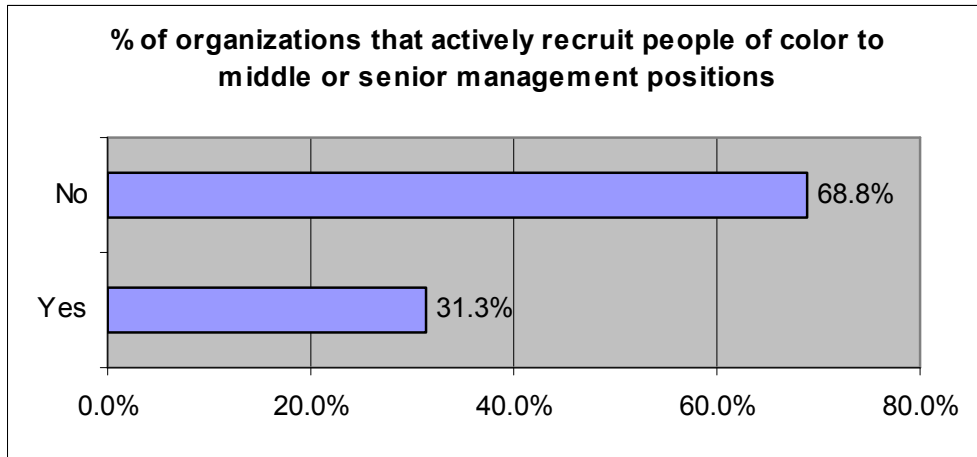


Figure 2. Active recruitment of people of color in management position

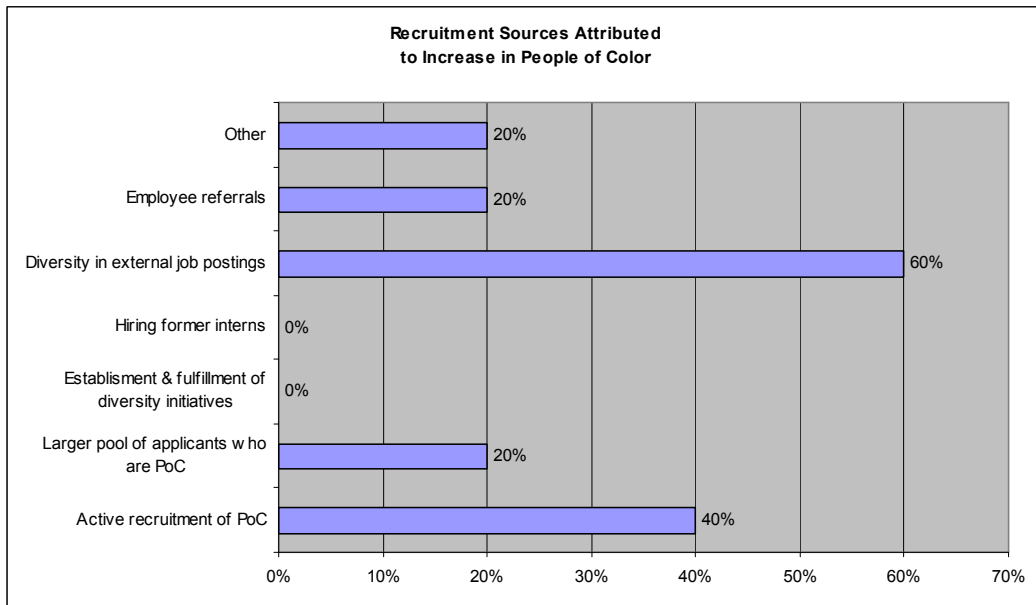


Figure 3. Recruitment Sources

Respondents were also asked whether or not there has been an increase in the number of people of color that make up their organizations administrative staff over the past 10 years. 37.5% (6 managers) said the racial make up remained about the same over the past decade. 31.3% (5 managers) said the number of people of color on staff has increased. When asked what recruitment sources they believed accounted for the increase, three managers attributed the change to having employed greater diversity in the external job sites in which vacancies were posted. This included for-profit and non-profit job sites, newspaper ads, radio, etc. One manager attributed the change to referrals by current employees that had been provided and another to a larger pool of available applicants who are of color. 40% (2 managers) credited the change to their organization's active recruitment of people of color. Recognizing the change in the racial demographic of the neighborhood in which her company resides, a manager at Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH) provided an open-ended response stating, "There is a large Hispanic population around DTH, and many of the children attending DTH are first generation in the U.S. Hence, their parents do not speak English. In order to better serve those constituents and reflect the community we serve, we've hired employees who could also speak Spanish. Today, the receptionist, registrar, and bursar are all people of color who speak Spanish." The remaining five managers that responded to the question shared a variety of other points that impact the number of people of color on staff, with the majority communicating that their administrative staffs are small, therefore it's hard to measure increases and decreases in the racial make-up when there are only one or two people doing the administrative work.

Another choice, which was not selected by any respondent as a tool that has influenced the increase in the number of people of color within dance organizations, was “establishment and fulfillment of diversity initiatives.” As stated earlier Dance/USA has diversity and inclusion listed as a core value. With the understanding that Dance/USA’s diversity value is all inclusive and speaks to race, nationalities, sexual orientations, dance genres, and so forth, its position on the topic should be very attractive to people of color who may be interested in working for the organization. This is a primary example of the pre-hire phase to which Rynes refers. The organization’s image, at least in part, is one that is welcoming of various perspectives and experiences to the “dance table” in an effort to better serve the field. Individual dance organizations may benefit in terms of being able to attract people of color by also creating diversity and inclusion initiatives as a part of their overall work. If the artistic side is demonstrating relatively high levels of racial diversity, boards and managers of dance companies need to embrace the opportunity that lies within that, which is being able to recruit a more heterogeneous and creative administrative staff. However, this is not to suggest creating such initiatives if the decision makers are not in a position to fully support it and/or if creating such initiatives is completely counter to the mission or vision statement of the organization. Diversity and inclusion statements should not be cosmetic tools used to make organizations more attractive. Organizational change cannot take place if people are not committed to the driving forces that are promoting the change.

### *Interviewee Perceptions and Recommendations*

To gain a practical sense of the views of recruitment of people of color in dance management in the New York community, 10 managers from the field were asked the following questions:

1. Is it important to recruit more people of color into middle and senior level administrative positions in dance companies? Why or why not?
2. If so, what are the ways to go about recruiting more people of color?
3. In your experience, have the organizations you have chosen to work for been mostly culturally specific? Does cultural specificity matter in your decision to work with certain organizations?
4. What are some of the opportunities and challenges presented to the field at-large in recruiting people of color to dance management positions?

In response to question 1, there was a unanimous “yes,” it is important to the field to recruit more people of color to middle and senior level management positions.

Michelle Burkhart of Dance/NYC said, “I think it is important is because I feel that the dance field in regard to the artistic side is very diverse, and it’s reflected in many multicultural ways. And I don’t see that reflected in the management, the administrative and the executive side of the field.” Making reference to the NEA study that found that 40% of dance artists in the U.S. are of color, Ms. Burkhart’s observation is a valid one. Though 40% is still less than half, it is greater than the 25% of managers in New York City that my survey found to be of color. I think there is a direct correlation between the lack of diversity in dance audience members and the dearth of managers of color.

Administrators are responsible for coordinating efforts to reach diverse populations, but if management is not reflective of such, then successful outreach efforts will be limited.

David Harrison of the Parsons Dance Company adds that, “It is important for a very solid business reason. And it’s not just about people of color, but it’s about having a diverse

workforce. Studies have clearly proven that groups make better decisions than individuals, and that diverse groups make better decisions than homogenous groups.”

From a cultural viewpoint Helen Wu of the New York Chinese Cultural Center says, “I think it’s important because so many forms of art have a cultural background or a cultural component. So, if you have practitioners that understand that culture, or if you have people who come from that culture there’s possibly, not always, a broader context for understanding that art.” An administrator from “Company A” shared Ms. Wu’s cultural perspective by stating, “I think it is of greater importance in culturally specific organizations. I think that as part of the brand, the internal fabric of that institution and who you designate as your spokesperson or your face, or multiple faces, at the senior staff level influence your brand perception and I think that is key to supporting your mission.” Ronald Lawson of the Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation further supported the argument that more people of color are needed in the field, especially at culturally specific organizations. “When you have organizations like Dance Theatre of Harlem, like the Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, like Ballet Hispanico, I think it’s incredibly important that folks in senior management positions ethnically reflect those institutions.”

All three of these interviewees were from culturally specific organizations. Therefore, it seems obvious that there should be people of color in management positions at these dance companies. But does the racial diversity that is lacking in the field mean that recruitment efforts will result in people of color migrating to culturally specific organizations? Do non-culturally specific organizations see a need for more managers of color?

In answer to question 2, the administrators said that there is a need for recognizing the importance of having people of color in senior level positions, thereby needing to make concerted efforts to reach more people of color. Dawn Gibson-Brehon of Ronald K. Brown/EVIDENCE says, “We may need to search in different areas. Possibly non-arts sectors, publicizing in journals and other print publications that we may not normally seek out.” Ronald Lawson supports this by saying, “I did not know about this opportunity at Ailey, and the only way I found out about it was because [a friend of a friend knew someone at the search firm]. Had I gone through other avenues or conduits, I probably would not be in this spot. I think [organizations] have to have more flexibility in how they conduct their search.” There is a need to expand search efforts beyond highly used resources like NYFA and *Idealist*. There is a whole segment of potentially qualified managers that do not know the field exists, therefore dance organizations need to seek them out.

However, educating people about the field is another way that recruitment efforts can be more effective. “I think the only way you can recruit minorities into arts administration, is to provide them with resources and opportunities early on (high school and college) to educate them about the careers that are available to them,” says Manuel Romero (Former Administrator) of Parsons Dance Company. An administrator from Dance Theatre of Harlem says that there is a need to build awareness for the field and young people know that dance administration is a career option. But Ms. Burkhart sees a step further to add that, “People of color in executive and/or arts administrative positions need to take on that responsibility in seeking out young people and encouraging young people of color to consider going into the field as a career option.” I think the role of



administrators of color in recruiting other people of color into the field is immense. There is a need for people of color to spearhead such efforts by creating targeted recruitment strategies. However, because most dance managers are not of color, it will take the support of all dance administrators to ensure change.

The purpose behind asking question 3 in relationship to recruitment was to gather a sense of personal preferences in terms of choosing a place of employment among the administrators interviewed. Answers to the question provide a practical perception to the field at-large as to what may impact an administrator's decision to work for certain organizations. My findings show that while cultural specificity is an added bonus for administrators of color who work for organizations that are representative of the culture of which they are a part, mission and personal connection behind the work are of greater importance. The administrator from "Company A" said, "I am more committed to the overall mission but I would have to say the number one incentive for me coming to 'Company A' was culturally driven." On the other hand, Ms. Burkhart shared that at one time she had interviewed with various organizations and felt compelled to work with a culturally specific organization. She says, "I think it may be that person's character and his or her own desire to want to further culturally specific organizations that guide that decision." So again, while cultural specificity is of importance, it is not always the driving force behind why a person of color chooses to work for that type of organization. Therefore, any assumptions that one could make about administrators of color only wanting to work for culturally specific organizations cannot be supported.

When asked what the opportunities and challenges the field faces in recruiting more people of color into management positions, Ronald Lawson says, "The

opportunities are that you have the ability to gain a seasoned professional that might have a different perspective and scope just because of his background. The challenges are that those very same professionals don't exist in large numbers." Helen Wu adds that, "I think there are certain misunderstandings again about what it takes to be an administrator. For example, a lot of the older generations of arts managers are white men. And so [people of color] don't see a lot of connection between [themselves] and the people they do see in those positions, and so they don't see how they might get there. I think another challenge for us is that you don't know what kind of a future you have in this career." So while there are opportunities in gaining great administrators from a segment of the population that has not been tapped into, lack of current field representation may deter some people from entering the field, as well as the ongoing issue of poor compensation. Gibson-Brehon thinks the systemic issue of compensation is more of a challenge now than it was 20 years ago, in turn making it harder to attract and retain young administrators who are ready to step into positions of management within dance organizations.

In all, interviewees identified lack of awareness of the field to be the primary circumstance behind why there are so few people of color in dance administration. However, they all agree that there is a need within the dance community to reach out to people, especially youth, to inform them that dance administration is a career option. No one interviewed expressed feelings of discrimination within the field to address why there are currently so few administrators of color at dance companies. While I agree that as a field there is no blatant exclusion coming from the dance community that would keep people of color from obtaining higher administrative positions, I do think that there has

been an inadvertent oversight of the issue, and now the field is in a position where it needs to catch up and close the gap.

### *Recruitment Summary and Reflection*

The Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies conducted a survey that found that while many nonprofit institutions were happy with their ability to recruit qualified employees, some expressed disappointment in the area of workforce diversity. Sixty-nine percent of the child and family services sector were pleased with their number of new hires who were part of an underrepresented demographic, while only 21% of theaters reported satisfaction in workforce diversity (Michaels, 2007). Only one-third of the survey respondents reported implementing recruitment efforts specifically designed to target underrepresented populations. Recruitment best practices encourage the design and implementation of a recruitment strategy. When organizations take an introspective look at what is being sought in a potential employee, the risk of wasting both tangible and intangible resources decreases. Recruitment strategies focus organizations' wants and needs and better positions them to attract the most qualified candidates. However, image is also important. How organizations present themselves to jobseekers can determine whether or not people will apply to positions and influence whether or not the organizations can keep the interest of the applicants they are most interested in pursuing. Therefore, when attracting people of color it is important for organizations to illustrate their commitment to diversity and inclusion by including statements such as "We strongly encourage people of color and women to apply" within job listings and/or having diversity and inclusion listed a core value of the company.

When looking to diversify applicant pools it is necessary for organizations to broaden their search base. While NYFA and *Idealist* are strong job sites for the non-profit arts sector, looking to other online resources such as [www.diversityinc.com](http://www.diversityinc.com), [www.imdiversity.com](http://www.imdiversity.com), and [www.diversityemployment.com](http://www.diversityemployment.com) to post job listings has the potential to reach more potential candidates of color. It also introduces the field of dance administration to candidates that might otherwise never consider seeking work within the arts community. However, as evidenced by Breugh and Starke's reference to Ullman's 1966 study, employee referrals are also valuable and generally produce more qualified candidates. This pre-hire phase sets the tone for the organization's potential success at recruiting more people of color. Having an intentional recruitment strategy for people of color is a first step toward racially diversifying the field.

The survey results and interviewee responses indicate the importance of recruiting people of color to the field of dance management. The survey found that the 16 respondents had an aggregate employee count of 208 people. This number is the number of actual individuals employed, including those at entry, middle or senior levels, and without distinction between full or part time. The largest staff size reported was 80 and the smallest was two, with an average size of five employees. Eleven of the organizations employed at least one person of color.

Though Appendix B provides a chart that provides a comprehensive look at the racial makeup of middle and senior level managers, I will highlight a few. Of the 208 employees, 115 were classified as middle or senior level managers. Nineteen (19) managers are black/African American, 77 are white/Caucasian, 8 are Asian/Pacific Islander, 10 are reported as Hispanic/Latino, and 1 was identified as multi-racial.

| Race                   | Total | Percentage,<br>where N=115 |
|------------------------|-------|----------------------------|
| Black/African American | 19    | 16.5%                      |
| White/Caucasian        | 77    | 66.9%                      |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 8     | 6.9%                       |
| Hispanic/Latino        | 10    | 8.6%                       |
| Multi-racial           | 1     | < 1%                       |
| Native American        | 0     | 0%                         |

Table 1. Racial composition of respondents

To highlight a few of the positions surveyed, 75% of the organizations reported having presidents/executive directors that are white/Caucasian. Approximately 44% reported having development directors who are white/Caucasian, which was also the dominant racial group for the positions of production director, general manager, company manager, education director, and finance director. Six of the organizations reported having school directors, of whom three are black/African American. Six organizations also reported having program directors, of which 12.5% (two managers) are white/Caucasian, 12.5% (two managers) are black/African American and the other two are Hispanic/Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander. What we see is that people of color make up approximately 30% of the middle and senior level managers among respondents. This is very similar to the national figures among all non-profit organizations, and specifically in the area of dance, which report 20% of executives and managers being of color.

Not only do managers not reflect the diversity seen on the performance stage, the lack of racial diversity is potentially stifling the growth of the field by not having more of a heterogeneous dialogue available to discuss dance's needs. However, the opportunity and challenge that is presented is active recruitment of people of color. As Ms. Burkhart stated, the issue plagues the entire non-profit sector. Low paying salaries, lack of

benefits, and long hours are systemic challenges that discourage many qualified applicants of all races from pursuing arts administration as a profession. But as Ms. Wu noted, when people see that the majority of the people who comprise top positions are of the same race, it can be disheartening to others who are not. While I don't believe that this is the primary challenge facing the field of dance in terms of recruiting people of color, it is a valid perspective that the dance administration community should embrace and work toward combating.

As stated earlier, many of the interviewees share the view that many people of color do not know that arts administration is a career option. Dance administration is a niche profession upon which many people seem to stumble. However, given the rapid growth that the dance community exhibits in terms of number of companies established each year, there is an opportunity that dance is presented with, which is making its presence greater to the general public. The field also is presented with the opportunity to market itself to aspiring dancers as an alternative career choice in the event that performing for a professional company becomes an unattainable goal. Dance administration can also serve as a transitional career for retired dancers and as a career option for those who may be inclined but not actively seeking the field due to lack of knowledge and possible preconceived notions about what being an arts administrator entails.

A November 2007 Boston Globe article, "Pursuit of meaningful work blurs the business, nonprofit culture gap," says "...Gen X wants to be able to see clearly what change they are helping to instigate. And Gen Y has made it clear that working at a company where they don't understand how they fit is absolutely untenable." Because

non-profit dance companies are mission-based organizations that often produce tangible results in the way they impact their audiences (which can be tracked with evaluation tools such as audience feedback, ticket sales, and demand for performances), this change in workforce values potentially positions the non-profit dance community to be able to attract more people to the administration field. While it may be difficult to find a plethora of qualified and interested people of color to work in dance management, the interest is there, as are the people.

Barbara Dufty, Interim Director of Doug Varone and Dancers, sees opportunity in people's desire to find qualified people without looking at skin color. "People ask, 'What can you do?' 'As an administrator do you have what it takes? I don't think people are really thinking along racial ethnic lines'." When trying to assess what employers are looking for in new hires, I in large part agree with Ms. Dufty that people tend to focus more on people's qualifications than color. However, I will not go as far as to say that race does not influence some employers' decisions to hire people of color in dance administration. Again, it takes placing value on racial diversity coupled with a strategic plan to reach diversity goals to change the ratio of people of color to white/Caucasian managers of dance companies in New York City, as well as the rest of the country.

McKay and Avery (2005) note that organizations should have clear motives for diversity recruitment. Some organizations are looking to expand their audience base, thereby hiring people who are part of the community they are trying to target. Some are looking to "increase organizational creativity and innovation and by extension organizational performance and profit share" (p.331). Others are looking to meet affirmative action and equal employment opportunity requirements. While the

motivations are valid reasons for establishing recruitment efforts for people of color, McKay and Avery argue that the motives are not enough to retain people of color if the employees are faced with challenges such as institutional racism and lack of organizational commitment to diversity goals.



## **Chapter 2: Retention**

An essential component of the post-hire phase is retaining employees. Employee retention is an employee's willingness to continue working for an organization for an extended period of time, as well as an organization's willingness and ability to keep people employed. Several organizations, especially in the for-profit sector, report seeing high turnover rates among people of color. McKay and Avery (2005) highlight that research studies suggest that showing racial diversity on the cover of company literature, hiring minority recruiters, and implementing any other visual strategy that makes an organization look diverse, draws a greater number of people from underrepresented groups who will apply for jobs available at that organization. The disconnection that lies between the recruitment of people of color and retaining people of color is embedded within the values of organizations. If organizations fail to assess how diversity interplays with the internal and external forces that will impact their growth, development, and sustainability prior to executing recruitment strategies that target people of color, there is a greater risk of employee turnover among that demographic segment. Also, if organizations fail to examine the current racial composition of their staffs, they may weaken their intended diversity initiatives. Where an organization currently stands in terms of its racial make-up sends a message to employees about how important diversity initiatives have been to the organization historically, which, again, influence people's perceptions of the company. Examining the current racial make-up of staff and attrition rates by racial affiliation can inform how organizations create and effectively implement strategies that will hopefully retain employees of color.

## *Turnover*

Therefore employee retention is contingent on an employer's willingness and ability to keep an employee, as well as an employee's willingness to work for an organization, employee turnover can be both voluntary and involuntary (Opportunity Knocks, 2008). How successful an organization is at retaining its employees is contingent upon several factors such as job satisfaction, employee organizational commitment, compensation packages, room for professional advancement, and job alternatives (Friedman and Holtom, 2002). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the change in turnover rates in the U.S. workforce from January 2007 to 2008 decreased from 3.4 to 3.1%. This decrease was also reflected in the leisure and hospitality industry, which includes arts and entertainment, from 6% in January 2007 to 5.4% in January 2008. Currently an estimated turnover rate among people of color is 30% higher than that of whites/Caucasians in the for profit sector (McKay et al, 2006). While the racial breakdown of numbers is unknown within the nonprofit sector, the *2008 Nonprofit Retention and Vacancy Report* by OpportunityKnocks.org, an online jobsite for the nonprofit community, found that arts, culture, and humanities organizations reported an average turnover rate of 17%.<sup>11</sup> Of the arts, culture, and humanities organizations, 42.5% stated that turnover is a problem within their organizations. The highest turnover rates reported were in the fields of human services and youth development, with rates of 28% and 37%, respectively. Education (13%) and civil rights, social action, and advocacy (15%) had the lowest attrition rates. The average turnover rates for all nonprofits surveyed was 21%, which is more than half that of the for-profit community, which

reported 45% in 2006 (Philanthropy Journal, 2008).<sup>12</sup> Most turnover occurs among middle and entry level positions, with support staff being identified as the most difficult positions to fill. Among management positions, development and program positions were identified as being among the hardest positions to staff due to the dearth of professionals in those areas. High turnover rates incur high financial costs to organizations. The amount of money goes into recruiting, training and compensating employees is costly, so the more frequently people decide to leave organizations, more money has to be invested in the recruitment process, therefore increasing overhead expenses.

| Organization Classification                         | Average Turnover - Top Reported Organization Class | Percent That Do Consider Retention a Problem for Their Organization |
|---|--|---|
| Human Services                                      | 28%  | 49%   |
| Education   | 13%  | 50%   |
| Arts, Culture and Humanities                        | 17%  | 42.5%   |
| Health Care   | 16%  | 39%   |
| Community Improvement & Capacity Building           | 20%  | 17%   |
| Youth Development                                   | 37%  | 45%   |
| Civil Rights, Social Action and Advocacy            | 15%  | 52%   |
| Philanthropy, Voluntarism & Grant making Foundation | 18%  | 25%   |
| Housing & Shelter                                   | 18%  | 36%   |

Table 2. Turnover by organization classification (Chart 5, OpportunityKnocks.org, 2008)

Causes of employee turnover in the nonprofit community are previously stated issues such as low pay, long hours, and dearth of job advancement. Retaining strong administrators regardless of race in the arts sector, let alone the dance community, is a challenge. Because there are so few people of color in middle and senior level management positions in the dance community, assessment of causes that deter people of color from committing to places of employment for extended periods of time is necessary

as the sector begins to mobilize change that will bring more qualified people of color into dance management (and arts management at large). A key mistake that many organizations make is presenting themselves as proponents of diversity to candidates during the pre-hire stage, but candidates who become employees later find that an organization's day-to-day culture does not reflect the diversity and inclusion expectations they anticipated. These expectations may include a currently diverse staff, organizational initiatives and activities that promote diversity, and organization-wide buy-in of the importance of diversity in the workplace. When people of color learn that the motives behind recruiting them were not genuine but were for organizational image and visibility instead, they tend to seek employment elsewhere. If they encounter institutional racism and job inequity their desire to continue to work for the organization will rapidly diminish.

### *Valuing Employees*

“Valuing is the most critical step in retaining people of color” (Fenn and Irvin, 2005, pp. 45). Support from senior managers and, again, organizational commitment to racial diversity as a strategic imperative is essential (Arthur, 2001). Cortazar (2006) references a study that concluded that diversity training programs have failed to eliminate bias and retain underrepresented individuals in management positions. He quotes Dr. Frank Dobbins, professor of sociology at Harvard University, who said, “The only truly effective way to increase the presence of minorities and women in managerial positions is through programs that create organizational responsibility.” From a dance organization perspective, commitment to racial diversity needs to feed from the board of directors all the way through the organization. Because there are so few people of color in dance

management it is difficult to assess if there is a specific problem with retaining people of color. Ms. Burkhart argues that employee retention falls on all those who have a stake in the operation of the company. From the top down, there has to be a system of people in place who will support the wants and needs of its employees. She also suggests that there must be recognition of and respect for those in administrative positions. "I think there is ultimately responsibility on several levels. I feel that Dance/NYC has the responsibility to continue to do programming and provide opportunities for these individuals to get together to network and have a support system. I think, ultimately, it is the responsibility of board members to glorify these administrators as much as they glorify the artistic staff... And I also think on some level there also has to be a better way to have working relationships between artistic directors and executive directors." But Ronald Lawson of Alvin Ailey finds that if the people who are hired into management positions know what they're doing and can effectively manage organizations, retention issues take care of themselves. He says, "To be in a place where it's great to work, where you don't have to worry about whether or not you'll get paid from week to week because the finances are straight, where the policies and procedures that have been implemented are in effect and work to benefit the entire organization, then you're less apt to leave."

### *Retaining Dance Administrators*

Retention of sound administrative managers of dance companies requires a combination of both Ms. Burkhart's and Mr. Lawson's observations. Dance companies are almost always operating with deficits and are in crisis management mode. This causes tensions to run high in the workplace and organizational focus to be on how to get the company back to a place of stability. While this is an understandable mindset of an

organization in crisis, I've found that professionalism and respect for colleagues dwindles. There are conceivably several other reasons as to why turnover rates are so high at non-profit dance companies, but everyone wants to feel valued and feel as though they are being supported in the workplace.

However, with respect to specifically retaining people of color, Dawn Gibson-Brehon of Ronald K. Brown/EVIDENCE said, "The field (dance managers, agents, funders, presenters) still does not adequately represent the changing communities in which these companies operate. I think for those organizations that would like to have diverse staffs and trained personnel, they have to develop programs to keep people. Whether or not these organizations have the capacity or time is another issue." Ms. Gibson-Brehon brings to light a valid point when she says, "for those organizations that would like to have diverse staffs." It is the objective of the organization with respect to staff diversity that is going to determine whether or not retention efforts need to be focused around a specific group of people.

David Harrison of Parsons Dance Company said, "Beyond doing a really thorough recruitment job, which levels the playing field for everyone to apply, I think there's potential for reverse racism if you start tinkering too much beyond that. Let's give everybody the absolute opportunity to be here and then let's work with them as an individual in a colorblind sense, in a gender blind sense, in a gender identity sense." This comment raises an interesting question. Would it be reverse racism if the dance community began to embrace recruiting, retaining, and developing people of color? I can see how Mr. Harrison could foresee that happening, but I think that all depends on the programming. The mission isn't to exclude, it's to include. Because a program designed

to retain people of color in management positions could be created does not mean that white people would not be able to participate. It simply means that the programmatic focus would be on the needs of the people of color. I would actually encourage non-minorities to participate in such programs to better inform themselves of the needs of this particular segment of the dance community.

To capture the retention rate of dance administrators in New York City, I asked respondents to describe how the turnover rate at their organizations has varied over the past 5 years. The responses may not accurately reflect the actual turnover rates of the dance companies polled due to the response being left up to the person answering the survey. There was no organizational assessment completed for the purposes of this study. Nonetheless, 73.3% (11) of respondents said that their turnover rate has remained the same. Two respondents (13.3%) said turnover has increased, which is less than the sector's reported 21% turnover rate, while two other respondents (13.3%) noted a decrease. One survey respondent abstained from answering the question.

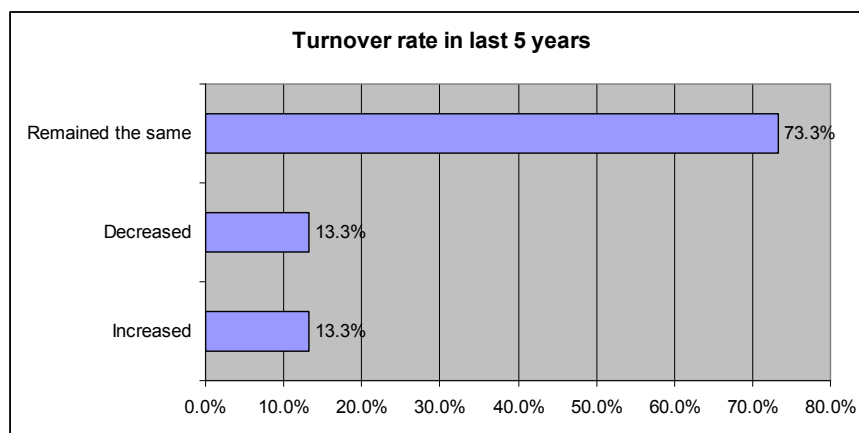


Figure 4. Turnover Rate

### *Job Satisfaction*

The survey also asked respondents how their organization evaluates employee job satisfaction. Most stated that meetings with the executive director or direct supervisors

are conducted with staff members, many of which happen on an annual basis. Two organizations stated that there are no formal employee satisfaction evaluation tools in place. One respondent said he measures employee satisfaction based on how long the employee works for the organization, if the former employee voluntarily stays in contact with the company, and by whether or not the former employee is willing to help the organization hire her successor. While this is clearly not a standard way of evaluating employee satisfaction, it is an interesting approach to looking at the organizational commitment component of employee retention and satisfaction during the “post-employment” phase. Some of the larger organizations reported having moderately more formal evaluation processes:

“Employees are reviewed annually by their department heads. The review is conducted both on paper and face-face, to allow for a dialogue about the employee’s performance and satisfaction with his/her job. However, should an issue arise prior to their review, employees are encouraged to speak with their immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Manager.”

Dance Theatre of Harlem

“Employees have an annual evaluation which is a cross evaluation between supervisor and employee. It is conducted in the form of a discussion which is not tied to future employment or compensation.”

Anonymous, “Company H”

“Formally, we conduct a staff review (an in-person dialogue) with each staff member every six months. Informally, since our office is so small and since there are no cubicles, all of our staff has extensive interaction every day, and job satisfaction is often a topic of discussion. Consequently, there are never any surprises during the formal staff review.”

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company

### *Retention Summary and Reflection*

Employee retention in the nonprofit sector transcends color lines. Aforementioned factors such as salary, benefits packages, and opportunities for advancement within an



organization are areas of concern that impact all employees. But this is not say that attention should not be paid to retention matters as they pertain specifically to people of color. Knowing that the turnover rate in the for-profit sector is 30% higher for people of color than non-people of color may illustrate the lack of forethought that is being put into the post-hire experience of people of color once they become members of a staff. Part of measuring the success of the recruitment process is observing the organizational commitment of the new employee. Although retention can be influenced by voluntary or involuntary circumstances on behalf of the employee, ultimately organizations need to have systems in place to ensure employee satisfaction. Because many dance companies have small staffs and smaller budgets, having formal systems in place such as access to a human resources manager to address employee needs and concerns may not be feasible. However, encouraging open communication among management and employees, as some dance managers have expressed, is a way to speak to employee retention. What is more, managers must value having people of color as part of the team. They must also be cognizant of the fact that while all employees may be working toward the same goals on behalf of the company, there are cultural differences, thus at times different needs, for each employee.

Ms. Gibson-Brehon noted that organizations need to be more reflective of the communities they are serving. Creating programs to recruit and train more people of color would be an ideal situation in a utopian society. Because most dance companies do not have the capacity to implement such programs managerial responsibility lies in creating opportunities for employees to grow within the organization. If promotions are not an option, professional development opportunities might be. Creating an environment

where all voices can be heard is also important. Ms. Burkhart highlighted mentorship opportunities for people of color. There is an opportunity that exists for the dance community to create a network for administrators of color. Friedman and Holtom's (2002, p. 11) study on minority networks in the workplace found, "employee network groups can be useful tools for helping companies retain managerial-level minority employees (although not nonexempt employees), thereby assisting them in meeting their diversity goals." Establishing such a network may also be a way to implement organized efforts on behalf of the dance community to recruit more people of color into the field. Because there is a direct correlation between employee satisfaction and organization commitment to retention rates (2002), dance organizations need to position themselves to create rewarding work experiences. And, again, much of the reward comes from employees feeling valued.

### **Chapter 3: Career and Professional Development**

Arts administration is a field that is somewhat plagued by managers and support staff that are often ill equipped to make effective business decisions for their companies. Many dance companies, due to small size and minimal funding, are operated by founders who ultimately just want to create dance. However, in order for their works to be seen, administrative duties have to be fulfilled. The inability to hire administrative help positions many dance artists, often times involuntarily, to become both administrator and artist. This means that the artist is also the development director, technical director, and executive director. The issue that ensues is the company's inability to grow due to lack of a strong administrative infrastructure. As the dance community embraces racial diversity and seeks to attract more qualified people of color into administration, the area of professional development in relationship to career development needs to be nurtured. We know that dance is a field that few know about due to lack of knowledge and education. We also know that dance administration is an area, based on current workforce trends, showing growing interests by emerging leaders who value charitable, mission based organizations. During Ms. Wu's interview, she mentioned that working in dance management requires administrators to place value on the soft benefits associated with working in the field. Again, because compensation packages are often not as robust as those offered by larger for-profit entities, the desire to work in the field must be driven by things less tangible. Therefore, when non-profit dance organizations seek quality employees, there should be a lot of emphasis placed on people's commitment to the work and willingness to learn. Yes, organizations need to establish a set of standards that should be used to assess whether or not someone is capable of performing a job.

However, in a field where the hours are long and the pay is low, an employee's demonstrated dedication to the organization is as important a qualification as skill set. Professional development programs can serve as a bridge to close the gap between potentially strong managers who lack certain skills that can be acquired through training initiatives.

Because there is a dearth of managers of color, two recruitment opportunities exist for diversity-change to take place in the field. First, is the opportunity to recruit people of color who have a solid interest in dance management but currently don't have the applicable administrative skill set. Second, is in seeking out people of color who currently do have the desired skill set but no knowledge about the profession's presence. Historically, the field has in large part been run by "amateur administrators." But this is not to say that the amateurs were incapable of becoming seasoned administrators. However we must also look at career development trends of people of color and assess what factors outside of a general lack of knowledge may deter them from the field before we explore professional development.

### *Career Development*

Career development is the process of self assessment that an individual embarks upon in order to make a decision about his career potential and the career path he would like to take (Cook, Heppner, O'Brien, 2002; Flores, Heppner 2002). To make an optimal career decision there are several internal and external factors that people must evaluate. How do personality and cultural traits impact career choice? How does skill set and education and self efficacy impact career choice? How do career stereotypes impact what people of certain groups may deem "appropriate" career choices for themselves (Flores,

Heppner, 2002)? Which industries are over- or under-populated by certain groups, and what are the implications? These are questions that are asked in the field of career counseling when addressing the career needs of multicultural populations.

There are several theories that explore factors that influence the individual career choices of people of color. Flores and Henner (2002) reference R.W. Lent's Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which "has been noted for its utility in explaining the vocational behaviors of racial and ethnic groups" (p. 191). The theory says that variables that account for individual differences (which include acquired and genetic characteristics), as well as direct and indirect contextual environmental variables that shape people's experiences and opportunities, ultimately mold a person's level of self-efficacy. "Self efficacy refers to an individual's beliefs concerning his/her ability to successfully perform a given behavior, while interests pertain to one's likes and dislikes" (p. 192). Self-efficacy influences one's expected outcomes for success or failure in performing certain tasks, which SCCT postulates has a direct influence on career choices, interests, and performance.

Another theory that addresses career development from a racial perspective is Cook, Heppner and O'Brien's Race/Gender Ecological Model. "The ecological model states that human behavior results from ongoing, dynamic interaction between the person and the environment. Behavior is the result of a multiplicity of factors at the individual, interpersonal and broader socio-cultural levels...The [Race/Gender Ecological] model recognizes that every person has both a gender and a race and that these factors decisively shape the individual's career throughout life, as she or he encounters opportunities or obstacles because of race or gender" (p.193). Other theories that describe

career development choices are framed around socioeconomic factors. In his study about the career paths of non-European American opera administrators Cuyler (2007) references the theory that examines the social and economic conditions that “influence one’s identity, values, and overall human and career development.” All of these theories suggest that career choices are ultimately framed around more than mere desire to pursue an ideal profession. Many people in this country are unsatisfied with their jobs. Reports show that less than two out of five employees under the age of 25 enjoy their jobs. Less than 45% of American workers between 45 and 54 years of age express job satisfaction (The Conference Board, 2007). While issues such as poor compensation and benefits packages are part of the problem, people also find themselves in situations where the job choices they make are controlled by environmental factors such as location, familial obligations, and economic status. Factors such as these can inhibit people from pursuing desired careers due to lack of financial and community support.

On average the number of people living at or below the poverty line has increased since 2001, with American Indians, black/African Americans, and Hispanics faring the worst (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). What is more, there is an obvious education opportunity gap, which has a direct effect on the number of people of color who are entering higher education, let alone the number of people of color who are looking to pursue arts administration as a field of study. What all of this means for the dance administration community is that in order for initiatives to increase racial diversity in the field, there must be deeper understanding of the barriers that many people of color face when career planning. There are people who choose not to succumb to societal pressures, but that is in large part due to them having had exposure to alternatives. The dance

community is not responsible for taking on all of the societal ills that plague many communities of color in order to attract more people into the field. However, it should take these challenges into consideration, accept them at face value, and plan an effective and efficient way to reach and educate people of color about dance administration.

### *Professional Development*

Professional development is essentially personal skill development, which is generally acquired through educational programs and workshops that are designed to enhance current skills or introduce new ones to professionals. Professional development instruction can be administered via classroom, internet, or on-the-job training programs. While many organizations used to be involved in the development of their employees, it is becoming more the responsibility of the individual (Baruch, 2006). If people wish to seek training in a certain area, it is up to them to seek out the opportunity. Generally speaking, many organizations have professional development funds which will financially support employee development, but they are less likely to suggest educational opportunities unless there is an obvious need for employee training, which more than likely has greater benefit to the company than the individual.

Within the non-profit sector there are several professional development opportunities that are provided by service organizations. In New York City organizations such as previously mentioned Career Transition for Dancers, as well as Americans for the Arts, Arts and Business Council of New York (ABC-NY), The Field, and Dance/NYC are a few organizations that provide professional development workshops to dance artists and administrators. Several of these organizations, such as ABC-NY partner with professionals in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors to create programs that will

provide artists and administrators with the most comprehensive and inclusive experiences. Courses of study include development, marketing, budget and finance, leadership, and audience development, among others. And recently there have been more professional development workshops that have included dialogues about diversity in the arts. In May 2008, ABC-NY hosted a workshop titled *Inclusion: Looking Inward and Challenging the Conversation*. There were approximately 15 participants led by a panel of representatives from WNYC Radio, all of whom were African-American, and moderated by Donna Walker-Kuhne. Of the 15 participants, there were 3 or 4 people of color, which does not include 2 of the staff members from ABC-NY in attendance who were also of color. Last year Dance/NYC also opened the door for discussions on racial inclusion through its *Race and Dance Town Hall* meeting, which was one of its most attended meetings to date. A *Race and Dance II* has been scheduled for November 2008.

There are both time and financial barriers that impede upon non-profit professionals from being able to attend development workshops. While I have no way of knowing whether time and money or simple lack of interest in the subject kept so many people from attending the inclusion workshop, there are systemic challenges that have been found to prevent non-profit professionals from taking advantage of available resources. Dr. Mary Hiland of Hiland & Associates in California conducted a study, *Professional Development of Nonprofit Managers* (2008), which surveyed non-profit managers and executive directors in the Bay Area about professional development needs. This study was primarily conducted to explore the “leadership crisis” that exists within the sector as it prepares for executives to leave *en mass* as people in the baby boomer generation prepare to retire. “The author’s experience working with executive directors



drew attention to the fact that executives are significantly impacted when the management staff they must rely on to be able to do their own work are either not available or do not have the management and leadership skills and competencies at the level needed” (Hiland, 2008, p. 1). Hiland found that both executives and managers strongly agreed that managers would benefit from professional development opportunities. But the study also identified time, money, and willingness to attend as barriers to obtaining such development. Another barrier cited was lack of organizational support. This barrier is an example of organizations showing lack of employee value. While finances have to be taken into consideration, especially within several non-profit dance organizations, showing organizational support for employee growth and development should not be sacrificed. Professional development’s purpose is to strengthen the business acumen of current and future leaders, revitalize individual and organizational drive, and position non-profits to better serve the public for the public good. This can be achieved by providing them with the tools necessary to more efficiently operate their organizations, thus executing programs that serve their target audiences. Therefore, it should be a priority for middle and senior level managers in dance to take advantage of appropriate resources.

Interviewees for this study were asked about professional development opportunities available through their organizations. David Harrison of Parson Dance Company said, “I am a huge proponent of extra-netting; getting out, meeting people, shaking hands, cross pollinating. But it is very much a case by case, as time allows, as money allows, as all the resources that we to gather here make it possible.” Another manager stated that she also highly encourages her team to attend professional

development programs but notes that it is up to the individual to participate in the opportunities available to them. Helen Wu said, “People will take their job in a different direction depending on their interest or developing certain areas skills. But it’s up to that person to keep herself active and just not be a lump.” Again, reaffirming Hiland’s findings, employees have to have the will to further their professional growth.

Dance Theatre of Harlem recently received a grant for the purposes of staff development. “We need workshops and seminars and professional development around project management and leadership and supervisory skills, as well as some simple stuff. We have a couple of employees that don’t know how to mail merge, and it frustrates me,” says the manager from DTH. It is this type of administrative inefficiency that several dance companies face. They staff themselves with people who are willing to do the work but who are not equipped to execute the work. The manager went on to say that she believes in empowering people in the workplace and providing people with needed and desired skills is a way to go about that. She also said that people being better at their jobs makes a better institution. The investment being made in DTH’s administration is going to make the operation of the school stronger. The long-term effects of the investment are to be determined, but the short-term will be a better trained staff that will have the training and skills needed to better operate, market, fundraise for, and strategize for the ongoing success of Dance Theatre of Harlem.

The field benefits from professional development opportunities. We know this due to the offering of and participation in development programs by field administrators. However, again, this is a field that has the obstacle of being under funded and minimally sought after by highly qualified people, both of color and not. Therefore, empowering

administrators and embracing the mentality of better employees making better institutions (and field), as the manager from Dance Theatre of Harlem stated, is a way for dance to take control of its leadership and managerial weaknesses, with one weakness being racial diversity.

The survey asked respondents if they offer professional development opportunities for their staff and if any of those programs are targeted specifically toward people of color. Of the 16 respondents, 62.5% (10 managers) said that they do offer professional development opportunities. These included a financial reimbursement plan for professional development, underwriting the cost to attend workshops and conferences, and subscriptions to professional journals. Dance Theatre of Harlem is the only surveyed company that identified having professional development programming targeted towards people of color. The respondent said, “The organization has been part of the Kennedy Center’s Capacity Building Program for Culturally Specific Arts Organizations since its inception in 2003.”

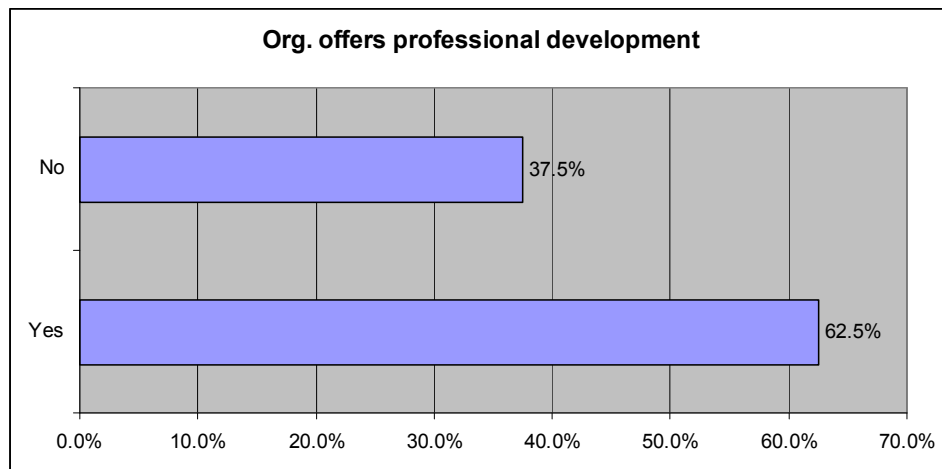


Figure 5. Professional development opportunities

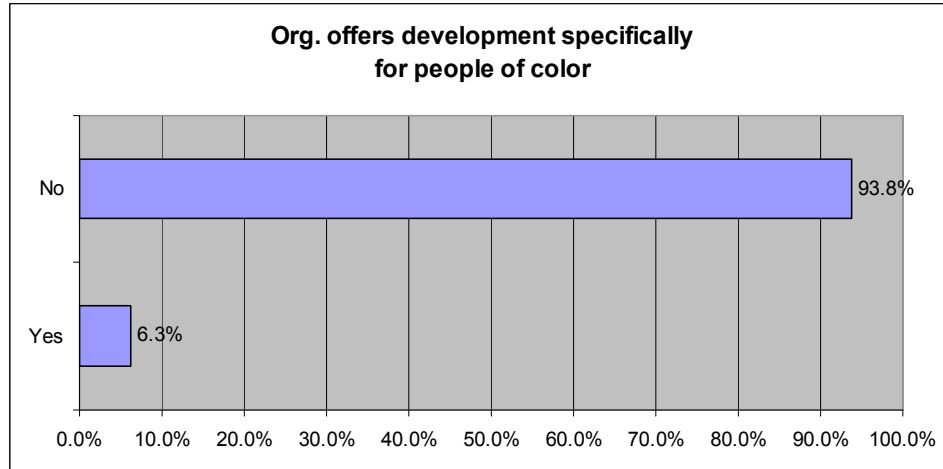


Figure 6. Professional development opportunities for people of color

*Career and Professional Development Summary and Reflection*

Dance administration has the unique opportunity to invest in the cultivation and growth of its professional workforce through professional and career development opportunities. Professional development resources are widely available to artists and administrators in New York City, but seizing those opportunities comes with challenges. Financial capacity, individual willingness, and ability to excuse oneself from office responsibilities during the work day impact whether or not continued education occurs among field practitioners. Hiland’s study found that executive directors and managers wish to see more professional development opportunities for managers. These are the people who may step into executive positions in the near future due to the anticipated mass exodus of executives who are part of the baby boomer population. The survey for this study also demonstrates a desire and need for professional development opportunities for dance administrators; 62.5% of respondents reported supporting professional development opportunities for their employees. Whether or not dance should invest in professional development specifically for people of color is still in question. There are

currently very few people of color in the field. On the other hand, many dance companies are currently operated by “amateur administrators” that need to further their management skills. Therefore, the idea of creating professional development programs targeted specifically for people of color may not be needed at time where there seems to be a greater urgency to develop administrators who are presently working in the field.

However, we’ve learned that Dance Theatre of Harlem is an active member of the Kennedy Center’s Capacity Building Program for Culturally Specific Organizations. This program began in 2002 and provides strategic planning guidance and other technical assistance for the executive directors, artistic director and boards of 32 culturally specific performing arts organizations in the U.S. While the program is designed to enhance the leadership of culturally specific organizations, its presence suggests that there is a need for the development of the leaders of these organizations in order to push forward the missions that these organizations have with regard to serving communities of color, disseminating the work of people of color, and/or telling the story of people of color. While this study did not specifically poll the number of people of color that are in middle and senior level management positions at culturally specific organizations (though that information was captured for the few culturally specific organizations that responded to the survey), it is a safe assumption that there is at least one person of color in a decision making position at most culturally specific organizations, thereby suggesting that there may be a place for development programs geared toward administrators of color within the New York dance community.

Ron Lawson believes that as people become more seasoned professionals they are “judged” based on qualifications rather than color. On the other hand, Manuel Romero

succinctly stated that there is a need for professional development opportunities for people of color and arts organizations should address the need. However, due to the expressed broader need for professional development in the New York dance community, this may be an area that may need to be revisited as the field's racial profile diversifies and there is a greater pool of dance managers of color of whom to ask this question.

In the area of career development, several theories that examine the multicultural differences that exist in choosing a profession show that there are environmental factors that play key roles in the decisions people of color often make. These include economic and social challenges and preconceived notions about “appropriate” fields of work for them based on societal images. Personality traits and exposure to (or lack thereof) a plethora of career choices also influence the career choices of people of color. If the field is striving to give all people what David Harrison identifies as the “absolute opportunity” to learn about and pursue dance administration as a career, addressing the environmental challenges to achieve this goal needs to be a focal point of the conversation. Therefore, it is important to recognize that there are barriers that keep people of color from the field of arts administration that surpass the obvious issue of lack of education about the field's existence. As previously stated, dance is not responsible for targeting social ills, but is responsible for progressing as an art form, which includes positioning itself as an administratively proficient art form. With the increased racial diversity in today's dance communities and the larger American society, administrative proficiency includes racial diversity. Who better to market and advocate for an artistically racially diverse dance company than a racially diverse team of managers?

## **Chapter 4: Conclusion**

More than half of New York City is comprised of people of color, though the largest single racial group is white/Caucasians who make up 43.9% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). It is no secret that this city is one that welcomes diversity of all kinds; and more specifically, the arts community is one that openly embraces differences. But if the perception of much of the city's population of color is that attending a performance at the Joyce Theater or Lincoln Center is for an elite group of people who are primarily white/Caucasian, the dance community needs to step back and look at the internal administrative infrastructures and assess whether or not the people who are the faces of dance companies are representative of the people the organizations are trying to reach. Do the administrators who are currently in those visible and decision making positions know enough about the environmental barriers in communities of color in order to reach that target market? Drawing more administrators of color into the field provides dance with the opportunity to address such needs. Concert dance has a long history in New York City. The city has been a place where the definition of dance has been challenged. The city is a place where many dancers of color were able to form their own companies and fill performance venues. The city has also been a place where racial barriers were broken when dancers like Arthur Mitchell pirouetted on the proscenium stage with prestigious companies like New York City Ballet. The artistic side of the field has fared well with achieving diversity. It is time to focus more attention on the administrative leaders.

### *Implications for the Field*

This study addresses the areas of recruitment, retention, and development of middle and senior level managers of color and the opportunities and challenges that the New York City dance community faces in seeing more of them. While there is recognition of the dearth of managers of color, the lack of resources, especially financially, for many companies does not position them to think about race as much as they do about making payroll. There seems to be a greater general consensus that finding qualified managers who are willing to work the long hours and with low pay is more of a concern than the racial composition of their staff. Moreover, many dance companies operate with a small staff that is only hired on a part-time basis. These day-to-day operational barriers influence how much value a company can afford to place on specific personnel goals, such as multiculturalism. However, as stated before and confirmed by practitioners in the non-profit sector, if we look to serve diverse audiences, we need to reflect such in our decision making body.

### *Practical Recommendations to the NYC Dance Community*

The New York City dance community is probably the best positioned to take on the challenge of introducing dance administration to the broader population. The resources available through ABC/NY, Dance/NYC, Career Transitions for Dancers, among other service organizations, enable the field to create organized programming efforts that target potential managers of color. Other practical recommendations are:

#### **1. Education and Outreach**

- a. Mentorship programs- Interviewees, survey respondents, and field research all suggest that mentorship programs for current administrators of color can be



a valuable resource in the area of retention. By pairing seasoned administrators with emerging leaders, the NY dance community has the opportunity to cultivate this special segment of the administrative population and ideally increase its numbers over time. This type of program can also serve as an example to other performing arts fields that are also lacking people of color in management.

- b. Internship programs- ABC/NY, in partnership with Con Edison, Chicago's Steppenwolf Theater Company, the National Gallery of Art, and the Smithsonian Institute are just a few arts organizations that have created internship opportunities that reach out to students of color. By reaching out to the younger dance community at local high schools and area colleges, dance can diversify its pool of interns of color. Because many students have little to no knowledge about arts administration, the dance community has the opportunity to target students of color that hold various interests; those who are participants in the arts, those who are inclined but have never participated in the arts, those who have no desire to participate in an art activity, yet have an appreciation for the arts, as well as those who have no relationship with the arts whatsoever. This may also provide dance organizations with the opportunity to create new partnerships with other institutions, which could supply other resources such as new target markets for audience development and possible new sources of financial support. However, this is not to suggest that the premise behind diversifying the field should be economic.

## **2. Expand Recruitment Efforts**

By deepening recruitment efforts through the use of various sources of online jobsites and print ads, the field has a greater chance of increasing its pool of people of color. To limit postings to sites like NYFA and Idealist, leaves a vast population of people who are not aware of job opportunities. Diversity Inc, IM Diversity, Diversity Employer, as well as school jobsites and online bulletins for organizations like the National Black MBA Association and the National Society of Hispanic MBAs, are other sources through which multicultural applicants can be reached. If the organization can afford an outside search firm, making the firm aware that you are looking for a diverse pool of applicants is important to communicate.

## **3. Career Network**

Creating a career network for dance administrators in New York City would enable all administrators, regardless of race, to have a place where they can share information about challenges and successes that they are currently facing within their own organizations. It can serve as a career building resource by providing professional development training for administrators, though this could best function as a program under other currently established service organizations such as Dance/NYC and Career Transition for Dancers. The career network can have both online and in-person (i.e. seminars, workshops, conferences) resources available to encourage cross-organizational collaboration that may positively influence administrative best practices. The network can also have a component that addresses diversity issues within the community from an administrative

viewpoint. Perhaps it is through the career network that planning efforts for minority internships, mentorships, and other recruitment expansion can take place.

#### *Recommendations for further study*

Until a formal investigation and analysis is conducted, the actual impact of whether or not the racial composition of the administrative managers of a dance company impacts what audiences see on stage truly remains to be seen. However, another area of concern emerged throughout the interviewing process. Though I did not capture the racial makeup of the boards of directors for the organizations surveyed, I learned via interviews that many of the boards were not racially diverse. The administrator from “Company A” reported that only two of the 23 board members were of color. This is astounding since the company identifies itself as culturally specific. Ms. Burkhart also referenced the lack of board diversity and its possible impact on what audiences see on the performance stage.

To provide another performing arts perspective on the topic, the national service organization for theatre, Theatre Communications Group, reported in a 2007 study that 88% of all theatre board members are white/Caucasian. In 2001 approximately 55% of theatre boards had written board/staff diversity policies. That number decreased to 27% in 2007. The interesting part is that the report also found that racial/ethnic diversity scored 3.5 out of a possible 5 points on a scale that measured how important it is to boards that they represent the diversity of the communities they are serving. Race/ethnicity scored higher than any other social or economic factor examined (some others were religion, politics, social strata, and sexual orientation). What role theatre

boards play in artistic decisions was not captured in the study, but assuming that some boards are able to express artistic preferences, how does the lack of racial diversity influence what theatergoers see, or the racial composition of the middle and senior staff at these various organizations? If a dance company has a very active board that does have a voice in the programming for a certain season, especially if their members' continued support is contingent upon them wanting to see specific works and/or dancers on stage, further examination of the involvement of boards in artistic pursuits may need to be addressed.

The major group missing from this study is the larger, non-culturally specific ballet companies like American Ballet Theatre and New York City Ballet. They were invited to participate in the study, but neither did. A representative from one of the companies was kind enough to respond by saying that her organization would not be able to complete the survey at this time.

Given these and many other unexplored areas of racial diversity in dance administration, I recommend the follow areas for further study:

1. Board composition and its impact on the racial composition of the staff and programming.
2. Deeper investigation about the differences in value placed on racial diversity in contemporary, traditional and classical dance companies.
3. Deeper investigation about the differences in value placed on racial diversity in the field among practitioners who are employed by culturally specific organizations versus those who are not.
4. Investigation about the recruitment, retention and development practices among all performing arts disciplines.
5. Meta-analysis of racial composition of administrative performing arts workforce.
6. Investigation of dancers' perspectives about racial diversity in administration.
7. Investigation of the racial demographic of applicants to programs in arts administration and those actually accepted into the programs.

## *Reflections*

Richard Caples of Lar Lubovitch offered a very insightful comment when I asked survey respondents to share ideas on how the field can go about racially diversifying administrative staffs. He said, “If the middle and senior level management is less diverse than lower level management, I would ascribe it principally to a time lag. I would imagine the overall diversity of people who have been with a company for, say, 20-30 years (senior management) probably reflects the diversity of candidates from 20-30 years ago better than it reflects the diversity of today's candidates.” It is my hope that Mr. Caples’ observation proves to be the case in the years to come. The racial demographic of this country has certainly changed over the past several decades, and that fact alone provides the field with a better chance to diversify the pool of future dance administrators.

Donna Walker-Kuhne said in her interview that she is tired of seeing revivals of *A Raisin in the Sun*. Ms. Walker-Kuhne’s argument is that assumptions are being made about what audiences of color are willing to see and what they find appealing. Yes, people tend to be drawn to people, places and things that share or are representative of something that is a part of their culture. However, that is not to say that people are not willing to step out of their comfort zones and experience new and unfamiliar things. How dance companies market themselves, carry out their missions, and connect with various communities is influenced by the administrators in those positions who are planning and implementing efforts to bring in various audiences.

This study illustrates that people in the New York dance community are, for the most part, very cognizant of the racial imbalance that exists among administrators, and

who are willing to be true champions for change. On the other hand, it has also shown that the dance community needs to put into action what it says it wants to do versus what it is doing—which is little to nothing. The 2008 National Performing Arts Conference meeting of service organizations within the dance community included the directors from the branches of Dance/USA, as well as managers from local and state dance service organizations. Michelle Burkhart was the only person of color sitting at a table of 20 or so administrators. This is an example of the types of professional situations that I hope become less frequent in the future, and I do not doubt that it will change.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey.

<sup>2</sup> Halpern's percentages are an average of two studies: Light, (2002) and Weitzman, Jalandoni, Lampkin, and Pollak, (2002).

<sup>3</sup> Concert dance is defined as dance performed before an audience that is non-participatory; usually performed on a proscenium stage.

<sup>4</sup> While two of the NYC based companies did not have racial information provided for their executive directors in the list provided to me by Dance/USA, I was able to confirm the race of one as white/Caucasian by information provided to me by a survey I distributed to NYC based dance companies.

<sup>7</sup> Information compiled by Dance/USA during FY 2004

<sup>8</sup> 1,200 full-time, 800 part-time, 630 contracted employees

<sup>9</sup> Figure is based on U.S. Census occupation data collection

<sup>10</sup> *Artists in the Workforce 1999-2005*, National Endowment for the Arts, (2008)

<sup>11</sup> Of the 425 survey respondents, 11% were arts, culture, and humanities organizations.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.philanthropyjournal.org/news/nonprofit-turnover-lower-profit>

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**Appendix A  
Online Survey**

**Dance Management in NYC**

**1. Name of person completing this survey and organization you work for.**

Name of person completing this survey

Name of organization

**2. What is total size of your dance company's administrative staff?**

**3. What is the total number of people of color on your administrative staff? This includes Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American and multi-racial individuals.**

**4. Please identify the race or ethnicity of the following staff members.**

**(As seen in Appendix B)**

If multi-racial or other, please indicate racial or ethnic make up.

**5. What is your organization's operating budget?**

- What is your organization's operating budget? Under \$500,000
- \$500,000-\$650,000
- \$651,000-\$800,000
- \$801,000-\$1,000,000
- Over \$1,000,000

**6. How would you describe your company's dance genre?**

- How would you describe your company's dance genre? Ballet
- Contemporary/Modern
- Tap/Jazz
- Ethnic

Other (please specify)

**7. Do you classify your dance company as culturally specific? For the sake of this study, culturally specific dance companies are defined as dance organizations that produce dance works that are about and/or inform others of a specific racial, religious, or social group that share a set of values, beliefs, and social forms.**

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Do you classify your dance company as culturally specific? For the sake of this study, culturally specific dance companies are defined as dance organizations that produce dance works that are about and/or inform others of a specific racial, religious, or social group that share a set of values, beliefs, and social forms. Yes

No

**8. Does your organization actively recruit people of color into middle or senior level administrative positions?**

Does your organization actively recruit people of color into middle or senior level administrative positions? Yes

No

If yes, please describe the methods used and indicate whether you've found them successful.

**9. Does your organization offer staff development and training opportunities?**

Does your organization offer staff development and training opportunities? Yes

No

if yes, please describe.

**10. Does your organization offer staff development and training opportunities that are specifically targeted to employees of color?**

Does your organization offer staff development and training opportunities that are specifically targeted to employees of color? Yes

No

If yes, please describe.

**11. How do you evaluate employee job satisfaction?**

**12. How has your turnover rate varied over the last 5 years?**

How has your turnover rate varied over the last 5 years? Increased

Decreased

Remained the same

\*

**13. As compared to 10 years ago, has there been an increase in the number of people of color who make up your administrative staff?**

- 
- As compared to 10 years ago, has there been an increase in the number of people of color who make up your administrative staff? Yes
  - No, decreased
  - No, remained about the same
  - If other, please specify

**14. If you answered Yes to question 13, what do you think has attributed to the increase in people of color? Please check all the apply.**

- If you answered Yes to question 13, what do you think has attributed to the increase in people of color? Please check all the apply. Active recruitment of people of color
- Larger pool of available candidates of color
- Employee referrals
- Establishment and fulfillment of organizational diversity initiative
- Hiring former interns
- Diversity in external job posting sites (i.e. newspaper listings, non-profit site listings, for-profit site listings, radio ads, etc.)
- Other (please specify)

\*

**15. How important is staff diversity to your organization?**

- How important is staff diversity to your organization? Very Important
- Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not Important

**16. What steps, if any, do you believe need to be taken to diversify middle and senior level management in American dance companies?**

**17. Please check here if you'd like the name of your organization to remain anonymous.**

- Please check here if you'd like the name of your organization to remain anonymous. Yes, I would like the name of my organization to remain anonymous.

**Appendix B: Profile of New York City’s Dance Administrators**

**Please identify the race or ethnicity of the following staff members**  
(comprehensive table of all respondents)

|                                     | <b>Not Applicable</b> | <b>Black/African-American</b> | <b>White/Caucasian</b> | <b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b> | <b>Hispanic/Latino</b> | <b>Native American</b> | <b>Multi-racial</b> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Artistic Director</b>            | 0.0% (0)              | 18.8% (3)                     | <b>62.5% (10)</b>      | 6.3% (1)                      | 12.5% (2)              | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)            |
| <b>President/Executive Director</b> | 12.5% (2)             | 0.0% (0)                      | <b>75.0% (12)</b>      | 6.3% (1)                      | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)               | 6.3% (1)            |
| <b>Assoc. Asst. Director</b>        | <b>62.5% (10)</b>     | 12.5% (2)                     | 25.0% (4)              | 0.0% (0)                      | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)            |
| <b>Development Director</b>         | 31.3% (5)             | 18.8% (3)                     | <b>43.8% (7)</b>       | 6.3% (1)                      | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)            |
| <b>Marketing Director</b>           | <b>62.5% (10)</b>     | 0.0% (0)                      | 31.3% (5)              | 0.0% (0)                      | 6.3% (1)               | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)            |
| <b>Education Director</b>           | <b>50.0% (8)</b>      | 12.5% (2)                     | 37.5% (6)              | 0.0% (0)                      | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)            |
| <b>Programming Director</b>         | <b>62.5% (10)</b>     | 12.5% (2)                     | 12.5% (2)              | 6.3% (1)                      | 6.3% (1)               | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)            |
| <b>Finance Director</b>             | 25.0% (4)             | 0.0% (0)                      | <b>43.8% (7)</b>       | 25.0% (4)                     | 6.3% (1)               | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)            |
| <b>Production Director</b>          | <b>50.0% (8)</b>      | 6.3% (1)                      | 43.8% (7)              | 0.0% (0)                      | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)            |
| <b>Operations Director</b>          | <b>62.5% (10)</b>     | 0.0% (0)                      | 25.0% (4)              | 0.0% (0)                      | 12.5% (2)              | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)            |
| <b>School Director</b>              | <b>68.8% (11)</b>     | 18.8% (3)                     | 6.3% (1)               | 0.0% (0)                      | 6.3% (1)               | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)            |
| <b>General Manager</b>              | <b>50.0% (8)</b>      | 6.3% (1)                      | 37.5% (6)              | 0.0% (0)                      | 6.3% (1)               | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)            |
| <b>Company Manager</b>              | <b>43.8% (7)</b>      | 12.5% (2)                     | 37.5% (6)              | 0.0% (0)                      | 6.3% (1)               | 0.0% (0)               | 0.0% (0)            |
| <b>Total</b>                        |                       | <b>19</b>                     | <b>77</b>              | <b>8</b>                      | <b>10</b>              | <b>0</b>               | <b>1</b>            |

**How would you describe your company’s dance genre?**

|                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| Ballet              | 12.5% (2)  |
| Contemporary/Modern | 87.5% (14) |
| Tap/Jazz            | -          |
| Ethnic              | -          |

**What is the size of your company’s administrative staff?**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Aggregate total of employees among respondents <sup>12</sup> | 208 |
| Average staff size   | 12  |
| Smallest staff   | 2   |
| Largest staff  | 80  |



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**What is the total number of people of color on your administrative staff?**

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Total respondents currently employing people of color | 11 of 16 |
| Aggregate total of people of color                    | 82       |
| Average # of people of color/ organization            | 5        |

**Do you classify your company as a culturally specific organization?**

|     |            |
|-----|------------|
| Yes | 18.8% (3)  |
| No  | 81.3% (13) |

**What is your organization's operating budget?**

|                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| \$500,000-\$650,000   | 6.3% (1)  |
| \$651,000-\$800,000   | 37.5% (6) |
| \$801,000-\$1,000,000 | -         |
| Over \$1,000,000      | 56.3% (9) |

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**Appendix C**  
**Interview Permission Form**

I give Ebonie Pittman permission to audio record this interview for the purposes of her Masters thesis. I understand that she may use any part of this interview in the written portion of her thesis. However, I also have the right to exercise anonymity and may choose not to have my name or the name of the organization I work for mentioned in within the text of the thesis, in which case an alias name will be created for me (i.e. Jane Doe of Dance Company XYZ).

Please check this box if you wish to keep your name anonymous

Please check this box if you wish to keep the name of the organization you work for anonymous

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Print Name

---

Signature

---

Date

---

## **Appendix D**

### **Interview Questions**

#### Recruitment, Retention, and Development of People of Color to Middle and Senior Level Management Positions in Dance Companies

##### General

1. Name?
2. Organization/ job title?
3. How long have you worked for the organization?
4. Do you have a background in dance?
5. How long have you worked as an arts administrator?
6. What influenced your decision to become an arts administrator?
7. Do you have a business or arts administration degree?

##### Recruitment

1. Is it important to recruit more people of color into middle and senior level administrative positions in dance companies? Why or why not?
2. If so, how can we go about recruiting more people of color?
3. In your experience, have the organizations you chosen to work for been mostly culturally specific (based on mission statement)? Does cultural specificity matter in your decision to work with certain organizations?
4. What are some of the opportunities and challenges presented to the field at-large in recruiting people of color to dance management positions?

##### Retention

1. Does your organization have systems in place to ensure employee retention?
  - a. If so, please describe.
  - b. If not, should they?
  - c. Why is it necessary to have employee retention programs that are catered to people of color in the dance field?

##### Development

1. Does your organization have professional development programs? If yes, what types of professional development programs?
2. Is there is a need for development programs that are catered toward people of color in the dance field?

##### Additional

1. How, if at all, does having a racially diverse administrative staff impact what audiences see on the performance stage?

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**Appendix E**  
**Electronic Letter to Pool of Potential Survey Respondents**

January 9, 2008

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Ebonie Pittman, and I am a second year graduate student in the Arts Administration program at Teachers College, Columbia University. I am in the process of conducting research for my Masters thesis, which is examining the recruitment, retention, and development of people of color in middle and senior level management positions in New York City-based dance companies.

The goals of this survey are to determine if there are any trends in the types of dance companies for which administrators of color are working, to identify factors that influenced the decisions of these people to become arts administrators, and to describe what is currently being done within the field to diversify dance management in New York City.

I would be extremely grateful if you would complete this survey. Your company is one of 28 with operating budgets in excess of \$500,000 from information provided by Dance/USA for FY04. All your survey responses will be attributed to you and your organization unless you choose to have your organization referred to under an alias name at the completion of the survey (i.e. Company A). Please note that the data collected from this survey will only be used for the purpose of this thesis.

Thank you in advance for your participation. I will be happy to share my findings with you when my thesis is complete.

Best,  
Ebonie Pittman  
Arts Administration, M.A. Candidate 2008  
Teachers College, Columbia University

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## Appendix F Keyword Definitions

1. **People of Color-** A people who are not of European descent, which include Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Asian American, Pacific Islander, and multi-racial individuals
2. **Middle Management-** Administrators who oversee a specific unit or department, and subordinates within the unit or department, of an organization but are required to report to an executive officer (i.e. Director of Development, Director of Marketing)
3. **Executive (Senior) Management-** Administrators whose primary responsibility is to oversee the day-to-day management of an entire organization. (i.e. President, Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director)
4. **Recruitment-** The process of attracting a pool of qualified applicants through the use of strategic tactics
5. **Retention-** An employer's capacity to retain an employee and an employee's willingness to work with an organization for an extended period of time
6. **Professional Development-** Professional skill development acquired through educational programs and workshops designed to enhance current skills or introduce new ones
7. **Career Development-** An individual's self assessment that influences his/her decision about their career potential and career path
8. **Diversity-** For the purposes of this study, diversity primarily refers to the variety in racial composition of a group of people
9. **Dance management/administration** (used synonymously)- The process of administering the operations of a professional dance company